

THE GLORY OF SRI RAMAKRISHNA

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MIHIR LAL DUTTA

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Shri Mihir Lal Dutta has translated in English the Bengali book "Sri Sri Ramakrishna Mahima" by Sri Akshay Kumar Sen, a devotee of Sri Sri Ramakrishna Deva.

The translation is laudable and I hope the same will go a long way in inspiring the readers and in attracting them to the life and teachings of Sri Ramakrishna Deva.

Swami Nirjarananda, President, Sri Ramakrishna Math (udbodhan), Baghbazar, Calcutta.

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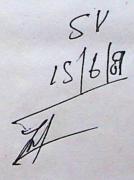
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THE GLORY OF SRI RAMAKRISHNA

(English Translation of "SRI SRI RAMAKRISHNA MAHIMA" by Akshoy Kumar Sen).

by .
MIHIR LAL DUT∓A



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72, MAHATMA GANDHI ROAD, CALCUTTA-700009 (INDIA) DEDICATED WITH PROFOUND HOMAGE AND LOVE TO THE SWEET MEMORY OF MY ILLUSTRIOUS ELDER BROTHER LATE ADITYA PRAKASH DUTTA THROUGH WHOSE AFFECTION. I HAD THE PRIVILEGE OF SITTING UNDER THE LOTUS FEET OF THAT GIFTED TEACHER OF HUMANITY, SWAMI ABHEDANANDA THE DIRECT DISCIPLE OF BHAGVAN SRI RAMAKRISHNA

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PREFACE

I may begin by saying that since my boyhood, I was brought up in an atmosphere of Sri Ramakrishna's idealism. An association called "Brahmananda Ashram" was founded in my ancestral house at Salkia, Howrah long before 1916, the year of my birth. After returning to India from America, Swami Abhedananda, the direct disciple of Sri Ramakrishna, who preached his master's message and Vedanta in the West for 25 long years, delivered a few lectures at Salkia A. S. School in 1923, which was largely attended by the public amongst whom my elder brother and some of his B. A. class-mates used to be present. Feeling greatly attracted by the inspiring lectures of the revered Swamiji, my brother paid visits to the Ramakrishna Vedanta Society in Calcutta at Eden Hospital Road and thereafer at Beadon Street to attend his weekly class lectures on various religious topics. I used to accompany him for an outing and sit quietly by his side at those places. However, in subsequent years, I had the intermittent opportunity of paying my salutations and obeisance to the revered Swamiji and receiving his benign blessings. For a long time, I cherished a faint desire to dedicate myself to the service of Sri Ramakrishna in some tangible way. At long last, my desire is being partially fulfilled atleast for this attempt. This is an English adaptation of the book entitled "Sri Sri Ramakrishna Mahima" originally written in Bengali verse and first published in the year 1910 by the celebrated author Sri Akshoy kumar Sen, the blessed householder disciple of Sri Ramakrishna. He is widely acclaimed for his monumental biography of the Lord in Bengali named "Sri Sri Ramakrishna Punthi". My object in this treatise is, to make available the purport of that original book, chiefly to the readers not acquainted with the Bengali language. The present treatise aims to express the the universal love, spiritual depth and grandeur of Sri Ramakrishna's sublime ideals. Every endeavour has been made to maintain the flavour and spirit as depicted in the original book by literal, simple and colloquial words without ornamentation while adapting to English. However, difficulties in adapting to English certain Bengali words (in keeping with their innate meaning) are almost insurmountable. Moreover, words fall into two categories-words used to express wordly experience and words used to express realised experience. Here, in this treatise, the author has made an attempt to expound the greatness of Sri Ramakrishna from a few words of his mystic experience. When these words are being used to express the experience of realisation, it becomes of the utmost importance, how we try to read them, The right way, perhaps, is to try with all one's might to find out what the words mean; to find out why those particular words were chosen by the Lord to express his vision and just in proportion as we succeed in this attempt, we shall gain a new insight into Him, from whom words together with the mind fall back baffled "(Yato Vacho Nivartante aprapua manasa Saha)". The more we scarch, the more frequently we are likely to ask, who are we; what is the purpose of our life with anomalies of joy and sorrow? There is one Reality anywhere and, that is the Eternal One. Whatever helps to reveal Him is a fact and whatever helps to hide Him is a lie, even if all the intellectuals in the world affirm it. would be a sad day for India, if the present generation came to lose their fundamental faith in the time old spiritual values and depend on godless materialism and scientific agnosticism. Even, if we persist without trying to find the underlying reality, it is nothing but existing as a mass of ephemeral insects, resolutely pursuing their pitiable objectives. If this transcript, imperfect as it is, helps a little, in creating a sincere quest for truth and earnest desire for nobler aspects of life for all, in this materialistic world and to identify Sri Ramakrishna as the living example and consummation of all the Divine manifestations for his universal love, catholic teachings, spiritual depth, beauty and grandeur of his lofty ideals, I shall feel that my attempt has been amply rewarded.

I hereby wish to express my profoundest gratitude and pay my obeisance through hundreds of prostrations to His Holiness Swami Vireswaranandaji Maharaj, Ex-President, Ramakrishna Math & Mission, Belur and Swami Nirjarananda, President, Udbodhan Karyalaya, Calcutta for their kind favour for encouraging me for the publication, Besides, I owe a sense of mute gratefulness to Swami Prajnanananda, President, Ramakrishna Vedanta Math, Calcutta, who is affection incarnate to me for all these long years and who readily obliged me by writing the foreward to this treatise, My grateful thanks are due to Sri Nirode Baran Chakraborty, M.A.Ph.D., Dept. of Philosophy, Presidency College, Calcutta for his going through the entire manuscript and rendering valuable suggestions and appreciation. Iam also thankful to S/S Ashutosh Ghosh (author of travelogues), N. C Kundu (Retired Addl. Labour Commissioner, Govt. of West Bengal). Rajat Gupta, Ranjit Kumar Saha of Naba Bharat Publishers, and Swami Aseshananda, Ramakrishna Vedanta Math, Publication Department, Calcutta for helping me in various ways to get the matter ready for the press. I would be failing in my duty if I do not express my sincere gratitude to my wife Sreemati Mita and my son Sriman Mitrangshu for their continued encouragement for this venture. I am indebted to Ramakrishna Vedanta Math, Calcutta for supplying me the blocks of the portraits of Sri Ramakrishna and the Panchavati, inserted in this book. I also acknowledge having quoted two songs each from the book entitled "Ramaprosad's Devotional Songs-the cult of Shakti", by Sri Jadunath Sinha (1st edition) and from Vol. V of the complete works of Swami Abhedananda, Centenary Edition.

199A, Aurobinda Sarani, Calcutta-700006 (INDIA), 21st July, 1986

Mihir Lal Dutta

FOREWORD

Let me first of all congratulate Shri Mibir Lal Dutta for the long awaited work of English translation of the memorable Bengali book "Sri Sri Ramakrishna-Mahima" by Shri Akshoy Kumar Sen, the gifted household devotee of Bhagavan Sri Ramakrishna Paramahansa.

Shri Akshov Kumar Sen fiirst wrote the sacred book, "Sri Ramakrishna-Punthi", a few chapters of which were already written during the life time of Sri Ramakrishna Dev, and it was at last completed with various events, parables and divine sayings or techings of Sri Ramakrishna, which were not included in any of the biographies of him. The 'Sri Ramakrishna-Punthi' was composed in the line of poetry or simple blank-verse like the Bengali edition of Ramayana and Mahabharata, and so it was very much appreciated by all classes of people and was popular. 'Sri Sri Ramakrishna-Mahima' was written in the close of his days, but it was a superb work with rich religio-philosophical ideas with various spiritual problems of human life and their answers. The 'Sri Sri Ramakrishna-Mahima really mitigates the needs of all kinds of people and consoles and soothes the minds of all, irrespective of caste, creed and colour. Truly speaking, the 'Sri Sri Ramakrishna-Mahima' goes ahead of many of the religious and philosophical books of this kind.

'Sri Sri Ramakrishna-Mahima' describes the surpassing glory of Sri Ramakrishna that animates and saturates all spheres of matter, mind, intellect and spirit. In fact, it sings the songs of the glory of Sri Ramakrishna. "It starts singing", says the Devotee, "when you become overwhelmed with grief, when the individual soul's nescience or ignorance tries to cause the heart to glow with fire, it starts at that critical time only". So, when we take refuge in Sri Ramakrishna, we realise his glory (Mahima) that removes all barriers and difficulties in the way of life,"

'Sri Sri Ramakrishna-Mahima' describes about the nature of mind and other things through Pathak and Devotee in the way of conversation between them. As for example, Pathak says: "Mind has a peculiar nature, wherever you fix, it will assume the form of the object. If it is kept with gross matter, it will become inert and dead. If it is kept with knowledge and consciousness, it will take the form of knowledge and shining consciousness. As a piece of coal, when lett uncared for in the muddy soil, it would look like the soil, again if you put it along with the fire, it will exist like a flame of fire". So being purified, if the mind becomes once transformed into consciousness, the Supreme Spirit or Brahman immediately embraces it. It means when mind is transformed into shining consciousness, it becomes similar to Divine Consciousness. Similarity makes union inevitable ('সমানে সমান না হলে মিলন হয় न।')। Unless they are similar, one cannot unite the other. So the mind and the individual soul should be purified and that means the mind and the individual soul or Jiva should raise itself or himself to the status of universal soul, the Brahman, and then the union (মিল্ন) between them is possible. Pathak says: "That mind which binds you with earthly fetters, again sets you free from the shackles." Sri Ramakrishna also says that mind and intellect cannot reach the Brahman and that means until and unless mind and intellect are purified and made shining, they cannot grasp the luminous and surpassing glory of the Brahman ('ব্ৰহ্ম মন ও বুদ্ধির আগোচর, কিন্তু শুদ্ধ মন ও एक वृक्तित (गांठत्र')।

So mind must be purified by the removal of impurities of modifications (vrittis) and then the transformed pure mind unites with the pure and shining Chaitanya, and that means then the mind-Chaitanya and Brahman-Chaitanya can easily unite together. Then there shines only the supreme one without the second. That state or condition is achieved through the grace and divine glory of Sri Ramakrishna' says the Sri Sri Ramakrishna-Mahima or The Glory of Sri Ramakrishna. It should be remembered that as these words and teachings have come out from the mouth of Sri Ramakrishna

the Saviour of the madern scientific world, they are faultless, pure and glorious, which will make all free from the bondage of the world.

Sri Krishna has proclaimed in the Gita (7/14) that the world of nescience (Sakti or Maya) is vast and eternal, but he who takes refuge in me, is saved and I rescue him and and make him free from the bondage of the world or Maya. In the similar way, Sri Ramakrishna proclaimed in the Sri Sri Ramakrishna-Mahima that it is easy for the men of the pure heart or mind to unite with the supreme consciousness, the Brahman.

I hope that this unique English rendering, 'The Glory of Sri Ramakrishna,' accomplished by Shri Mihir Lal Dutta, will inspire all kinds of readers and devotees in India and abroad and will elevate their minds from the mundane world to the blissful transcendental sphere, bringing unto them tranquil peace, eternal solace and heavenly happiness.

19B, Raja Rajkrishna Street. Calcutta – 700006. 21st July, 1986 Swami Prajnanananda, President, Ramakrishna Vedanta Math. Calcutta.

THE GLORY OF SRI RAMAKRISHNA

Brother! Such is the sweetness of the sayings of Sri Ramakrishna that listening to them will refresh the mind and bring relief to your life. Even water will ooze out of a stone and dead trees will sprout up green buds.

Pathak and Probodh—both of them are actors on the stage and regard Sri Girish Chandra Ghosh as their master. Since the drama 'Chaitanyalila' was staged in the theatre, they have seen Bhagwan Sri Ramakrishna. They kissed the dust of Sri Ramakrishna's holy feet and besmeared their body with that sacred dust.

(The book begins with a dialogue between two persons viz. Sri Pathak and Sri Probodh revealing the greatness of Sri Ramakrishna.)

Pathak—Look, Probodh, I have tested various intoxications. When addiction to a new habit is created, the fun persists for some days. Thereafter, the intensity of that gaiety fades out; that is why, a new intoxication has to be resorted to. In this way, all the intoxicants have been exhausted, only the habit of taking hemp remains unrealised. That is also becoming almost stale.

In this way, they continued their conversation and smoking. In the course of their talks, the topic of Sri Ramakrishna Paramhansha cropped up.

Pathak—Look brother! that Thakur Paramhansha whom Girish Babu considers as his Guru (spiritual guide) is a good natured man and a saintly person. He has no show of matted hair or other coloured robe and of a body besmeared with ashes, unlike other ascetics. One more thing—he has no egoism or self conceit in him.

At the very first opportunity, he bows down to other persons. How beautiful is his physical frame! His lips are slightly red, eyes carved, and the face is shinning and beaming with a radiance. No sooner than anybody sees him, he has to submit his will to his feet. His talks are so pleasant! Brother—I have never heard such melodious songs before—such was his sweet musical voice! There are so many expert musicians in our theatre and so many were there before them. We have also heard their musical performance but no body could sing like him. Nowadays, everybody is of high praise for Thakur Paramhansha.

Probodh—Do you know that there is yet another special quality of Thakur Paramhansha? So have I heard—he was the high priest of Rani Rashmoni, (a rich landlady) in the Kali temple at Dakshineswar. The Divine Mother Kali became gracious to him for his ceaseless prayers and constant worship and manifested her real form to him. Whenever he desires passionately, he can see the Divine Mother face to face, and starts talking to her. In that very theatre, after seeing the actresses one day, he became unconscious after crying loudly "Oh Divine Mother! Oh Divine Mother of bliss!" After a while, he started muttering something within himself.

Pathak—That is not unconsciousness but it is called 'Samadhi' or Divine ecstacy and the murmurings with himself were his conversation with the Divine Mother. I have heard that he can get to know everything—the Divine Mother discloses everything to him. Though he is not literate in the true sense, yet the learned scholars are defeated in their argumentations with him.

Probodh—Look brother! When he is not a literate person, how can he defeat such learned scholars in debates?

Pathak—One who talks with the Divine Mother—what kind of human being is he! He has not to talk much with those learned people; listen what happens. These scholars come from far and wide, with much exultation and start debating initially with much tenacity. Thereafter, when the arguments are dragged too far, Sri Thakur Paramhansha just touches them once and those scholars get bewildered.

Probodh-What happens then?

Pathak—Thereafter, far from raging and storming, some of them begin to chant hymns with folded hands, some roll at his feet, some begin to cry and others pray loudly saying 'arouse my consciousness'. Things happen in this way.

Probodh—Well brother! Do these people behave in that manner only after they had seen something? Have you heard what do they perceive after he had touched them?

Pathak-Yes, I have heard-some see the image of Lord Siva, some of Mother Kali, some of Lord Krishna, and Lord Rama and some others get the vision of something which they cannot express! So many people have been driven to the wall by that Thakur. Look! What transformation has taken place within Girish Babu, before our very eyes! Of all persons Girish Babu is not an ordinary man! He does not bow down his head before any body. He does not even visit the houses of his relatives, lest he has to pay obeisance to his maternal and paternal uncles and other elderly relatives. He is a staunch atheist. He will not pronounce the name of God even, if a tiger may jump at him to devour. He becomes furious at the sight of the ascetics and mendicants and chases them away with his stick. He goes to cut and chop off the images of gods and goddesses in pieces with a chopper. Perhaps, you may be aware that in the beginning, severe sarcastic remarks were showered on that Thakur Paramhansna in this very theatre. Thereafter, that Thakur uttering his mystical formula, as soon as touched Girish Babu, he came under his complete control. Now, it is Girish Babu who calls him 'Bhagwan' (Blessed Lord).

Probodh—Well brother,—do you know if any other person has been similarly changed?

Pathak—Yes—the other day, Sri Shashadhar Tarka-Chudamanee caused a stir in the town with his lectures. One who has heard his speeches was of high praise for him. To-day he lectured here and the other day there, and in this way there was a great sensation in the town. After that, Thakur Paramhansha went to meet him at his residence and spoke to him something after touching his body.

Prboodh-What happened then?

Pathak—As expected—no sooner than he was touched, he became speechless! Since then, that great scholar Sashadhar ran after Thakur Paramhansha for days together. He did perceive something within him; nowadays, he has become almost silent.

Probodh-Do you know of anybody else?

Pathak—There are so many persons of whom I shall tell you more about them in time.

Probodh-Wherefrom did you hear so much?

Pathak—Brother: wherever I move about nowadays, I hear so much talks about Thakur Paramhansha.

Probodh—Where is that Thakur now please?

Pathak—I have heard that he is now staying in a garden house at Cossipore. He is suffering from severe pains in his throat. That is why, his disciples are arranging for his medical treatment keeping him there. The disease is serious. I have also heard, that all the best physicians and doctors of the town have admitted their helplessness in curing his disease. Even Dr. Mahendra Lal Sarkar could not improve his condition.

Probodh—Come along: let us go and see that Thakur Paramhansha. On hearing that his disease has taken such a difficult turn, I got an extreme shock.

Pathak—Brother! I am equally shocked. Then, let us go. (Both of them started walking on that road. It was then about 2 o'clock at noon. After walking some distance, both of them became hungry).

Probodh—Brother! further walking is not possible as we are too hungry and the distance is over three miles. Further, neither of us is carrying a single paise in our pocket. When we are once out, we will reach there whatever may happen. You said a little while ago that Thakur Paramhansha, by mere touch, turned some more people speechless. Will you please narrate those incidents? Please begin now. Please note—as

the physical appearance of that Thakur is pleasant and sweet, so are the stories and incidents about him.

Pathak—The other day, I went to the rendezvous of Babu Dutta Lane where many people were talking about that Thakur Paramhansha. The discourses were interesting to hear. Somebody said—Sri Keshab Chandra Sen gathered so many disciples around him; besides, by proceeding to England, he enchanted those learned Englishmen with his eloquent speeches. Here, in India, he founded a number of temples of Brahmo Samaj in various places. The eloquence of his pratory is such, as to charm people once they have heard his speeches. Do you remember that day when he delivered his lectures in the Beadon Square, such a huge gathering took place inside the square and the adjoining outer places that the crowd overflowed the garden and there was a stir in the town? After that Keshab Babu met Thakur Paramhansha.

Probodh—What happened when they met?

Pathak—That person told me that after keeping the company of Thakur Paramhansha for a few days, there came a total transformation in Keshab Babu who was changed into a different man! He began to visit frequently Dakshineswar along with his own disciples. Occasionally, he used to invite Thakur Paramhansha to his residence. In this way, that flow of oratory of Keshab Babu died down, and he began to sit quietly underneath the feet of Thakur Paramhansha and listen to what he said. One day, Thakur Paramhansha asked Keshab Babu "How do you begin your lectures Keshab—just demonstrate something of that sort before me? Keshab said in reply "Sir, how can I go to a smithy shop to sell the steel needles?"

Probodh—What wonder! such a great man like Keshab Babu was driven to the wall by a simple priest of Mother Kali who is not even literate in its true sense. In this very city, there are thousands of renowned high priests, professors of Sanskrit Colleges who can talk constantly in sanskrit, creating confusion and bewilderment. But, none is like him; nor have I heard if there is any body like him anywhere.

Pathak—You yourself said a little while ago that some one told you that Thakur Paramhansha was the priest of Mother Kali. Being pleased with his dedicated worship and constant prayer, the Divine Mother granted him a direct vision; whenever he possionately calls her, the Divine Mother appears before him and begins to talk to him. Can he be compared with any other human being who talks directly with the Divine Mother? He has attained God-consciousness.

Probodh—Well, Thakur Paramhansha saw Mother Kali face to face while performing his day to day priestly duties and prayers. But there are so many idols and images of Mother Kali in the city as well as several priests are also engaged in each of these places, who decorate the image of the Mother Kali with superb dress, and offer sweets and cooked food to the deity. But, instead of being identical to him, they turn out to be persons quite different from him. Can you say why it is so? Kalighat too is a sacred place where the Mother is a lively deity. I am aware of the things prevailing there too.

Pathak-What one earnestly longs for, his desires are fulfilled accordingly. Thakur Paramhansha became the priest at Dakshineswar for worshipping the Mother Kali in the hope of having a direct vision of the Divine Mother. He accepted the appointment of being a priest to have direct talks with the Mother. That is why, the Divine Mother being pleased with his prayers granted him a direct vision. She talked as a living deity to him and whenever he yearns for her, she manifests and appears before him and begins to talk to him. The other fellows, though they are superficially devout but are not true worshippers; rather they are averse to true worship and prayer. The Divine Mother, accordingly, accedes to their prayer. Instead of being blessed with the touch of the lotus feet of the Divine Mother or having the opportunity of direct talks with the Mother, they consider themselves benefited by the rice and fruits offered to the deity. Besides, the priests go on gossiping with the clients who sponsor the offerings to the deity (for favour of sacerdotal fees) and the entire ceremonial service thus comes to an end.

Probodh—Brother, how do you collect so much details? We are living together for a long time but I could not follow these significance properly.

Pathak—I too did not understand a bit of these things earlier. But the day, when Thakur Paramhansha set his right foot in our theatre and went into a state of Divine ecstasy (Samadhi) and Girish Babu started shouting immediately "Come one and come all and get yourself blessed with the dust of his holyfeet". I hurriedly came there and kissed the dust of his holyfeet (tears trickled down my eyes at that moment) and I cried "Thakur, have mercy on me". Since then, I started realising bit by bit, that I have somewhat been transformed! I find that with the grace of Thakur only, I am beginning to understand all these. Another funny thing is, the more I listen to these incidents of Thakur, or talk about him, which I did not understand earlier, I am able to follow now.

Probodh—You just said that you have been transformed by him. What does that mean? What did he do to you? Tell me frankly what happened to you?

Pathak—I cannot explain to you more than what I have already said. Well, you may consider it as a deep sleep, though now, the sleep is somewhat disturbed.

Probodh—I cannot follow at all what you say. Well, brother, how shall I be able to understand as you do?

Pathak—Let us move. Afterall, we are now going to that Thakur only. I too shall beg of him something again. You may follow suit.

Probodh—I am a bit puzzled as to what shall I beg of him? You better guide me in this matter.

Pathak—He, to whom you are approaching, will guide you to follow and how to pray for a favour. Such is the greatness of Sri Ramakrishna and the glory of his teachings! The more Probodh and Pathak were talking about Thakur, the more their consciousness was awakened and they were beginning to understand the Divine Sport (Lila) of Thakur. Repetition of the name of Sri Ramakrishna is the grand mystical formula and discourses on the sayings of Sri Ramakrishna tantamount to

ceaseless meditation and prayer. The worldly people would gain self-knowledge by constant chanting of the incidents of his Divine Sport (Lila). As a huge blaze of fire is caused by rubbing one piece of wood with another, exactly in a similar way, consciousness (the dispeller of ignorance) is revealed by repeated discussions on the Sayings of Sri Ramakrishna.

Probodh—You just said that Keshab Babu was completely transformed by keeping company of Thakur Paramhansha, I could not follow what was the incidental cause? Will you please clarify?

Pathak—Being unable to follow what that particular person described, in the manner you did, I accosted him about those incidents. I too could not understand at first what he said. He narrated that in the beginning, Keshab Babu used to talk of impersonal, formless, Supreme Being. But now-a-days he always cries "Divine Mother! Oh! Divine Mother!" That means Keshab Babu was following a particular path of his choice for realisation of the Supreme Spirit but Thakur Paramhansha found out that he was not treading the correct path to reach the spal. Immediately thereafter, he guided Keshab Babu to the appropriate path of realisation.

Probodh-You better explain this in greater details.

Pathak—Listen, let me cite an illustration. It is just like a boat plying without its helmsman, while a severe storm started blowing violently. The boat was tossing in all directions being uncontrollable, and was speeding in the direction towards which the gale was driving. This might severely result in its dashing against the sandy shore or some rocky land and the boat is sure to be sunk after being shattered by such a dash. Just at that moment, if an expert boatman quickly gets into that boat, what action does he take at that moment? He, at once steers the boat and directs it in the right direction. Keshab Babu was an extremely devout person but he was wandering aimlessly. Thakur showed him the correct path only and guided him to follow that path.

Thakur Ramakrishna could not swallow any food for long ten months due to severe pains in the throat. The attending disciples used to offer him liquid diet in the form of drinks. Nowadays, he cannot swallow even that. Whatever is poured into his mouth, bulk of it trickles by the side of the mouth and a very little quantity of it enters the stomach; for this reason, the attending boys prepare surplus quantity of such liquid diet to feed him. Today, the pain has increased tremendously and a little quantity of it only has been swallowed and practically bulk of the quantity is left in the pan in front of him. All the doors and windows of the room in which Thakur is lying, are closed. That place where his bed has been spread is extremely secluded. Lying here one cannot ascertain who is coming in or going out of the ground floor of the garden house. But the affectionate Thakur came to know that Probodh and Pathak have arrived there to see him and they were very hungry. At once, Thakur called one of the attendants and instructed him "Look, call those two persons who have just arrived downstairs and bring them to me". According to his instructions, no sooner the attendant entered by the door of the room where Thakur was lying, accompanied by these two fortunate persons. Thakur began to attract their attention by repeated waiving of his hands shouting "Come, come on, I am waiting here with the food for you only. You are extremely hungry, take and eat it". Both of them prostrated before Thakur with reverence and repeated salutations and kissed the dust of his holy feet. Thereafter, with profound joy they began to fill their belly with the sacred food.

Oh! devout and generous reader! just imagine the picture in the mirror of your heart! Is it within my competence to paint the picture of this unprecedented Divine Sport (Lila) with my pen and ink? What a diverse Divine Sport it was! Divine Sport (Lila) is extremely more attractive than the Absolute. It is he, who is unspeakable, unthinkable, the Supreme Being, all knowing, all pervading, beginningless, eternal, undivided, existing in the minutest particles of nature, absolute and source of pure existence, intelligence and bliss now enacting the last scene of the drama of the phenomenon of Sri Ramakrishna in the garden house of Cossipore in the mundane theatre together with a few of his devotees, by

throwing dust into the eyes of the world at large. His make up is humility, poverty, and infinite compassion for the wellbeing of the humanity. His physical frame is emaciated, pale, and reduced to a skeleton. Though he transcends words and perception, yet to set examples to the worldly people by behaving and becoming like them, he is revealing his real form. His make up is like that of the poor and miserable, yet he is distributing freely and without distinction the priceless jewels longed for even by the gods. What fun did he make with Probodh and Pathak, is there any hard-hearted soul who will not be softened on hearing this sportive play? Look! is there any limit or comparison of his compassion? Find out whether he is the purifier of the sinful or not! Knowing fully well that the Supreme Being is all powerful, I am unable to follow with what limited knowledge people denounce the creed of incarnation of Divinity. Fie on that limited knowledge!

The appearance of Sri Ramakrishna is all blissful. No matter, however earthly attached a person may be, he will float in the sea of joy or dip therein occasionally so long they keep his company. We have all along felt the greatness of Sri Ramakrishna for his infinite power to alleviate sorrow and gloom.

Both Pathak and Probodh together had their fill with the consecrated food offered to them with great joy. Thereafter, while bidding farewell to him, they pleaded to him with tears in their eyes and folded hands saying "Thakur, it is our earnest prayer that we may remain devoted and dedicated to your blessed feet". Thakur kept silent and smiled a little. He had such a joyful countenance which could enchant the whole world. Once having a glimpse of that, no one will forget the same in any of his cycle of births. He was kind enough to show that beaming face to them. Both of them came home talking all the way about Thakur. Within a few days after that, news reached them that Thakur was no longer living in his playground of Divine Sport. On hearing this news, they bitterly lamented for days together and thereafter their mental exuberance was quietened.

II

Through the grace of Sri Ramakrishna their earlier nature began to change gradually and they became more and moreinclined to their household duties. The sense of responsibility towards their family and children was aroused. They got over their tipsiness and began to listen attentively to any talks on Sri Ramakrishna. Further, they started showing sincere reverence and true devotion towards the disciples of Thakur and participated in the festivals and rejovings about Thakur, Many of them assembled together to sing loudly the various aspects and merits of Sri Ramakrishna's Divine Sport in melodious verse to the accompaniment of musical instruments and drums. They began to hung up the photo of his sublime figure in the dressing room of the theatre and decorated the same with bunches of wreaths of beautiful flowers on the days of their play. Everytime, while coming out of the dressing room to the stage for acting, they used to bow down their heads before the photo of Thakur. They further advised their artistes to express their deep reverence and devotion to Thakur and often talked to them of the various attributes of Thakur. Thus gradually, love and devotion for Thakur grew in their hearts.

In this way, twelve to thirteen years rolled by. Now, they found out that the Thakur, whom they had the opportunity to see physically and express their deep regard, was not a simple god-man. Though he was indeed a man of profound respect, yet his greatness bewildered the people of different countries. The banner of his name and fame was flying high in several renowned places of England and America. The ladies and gentlemen of Europe were coming in a body to visit the playground of his Divine Sport (Lila). The foremost learned scholar of England had written his biography and started a movement in his name. The disciples of Thakur have become the conqueror of the world. They have performed such things as are not humanly possible. On hearing and observing all these things, they (these two persons) became very eager to listen to the events of his Divine Sport (Lila). One day, when

they met one of the devotees who is dedicated to Thakur, they asked him "Sir, will you please tell us some of the events of the life of Thakur; we have developed an urge to hear these incidents". Finding an undercurrent of devotion to Thakur flowing within the minds of those people who were taking part in theatrical performance, that fellow burst into tears and said "Behold brother! I am an idiot; how can I narrate the profoundly Divine Sport of Sri Ramakrishna? But, I shall tell you whatever he has very kindly taught and revealed to us. You may put your querries to me".

Pathak—You people regard Sri Ramakrishna as the Blessed Lord. Is he really so?

Devotee—In the first place, please answer one of my questions. Thereafter, I will narrate. "Whom do you accept as the Blessed Lord. How is your Lord?"

Pathak—The Blessed Lord is Supreme and Almighty. He can perform anything if he desires. He is the creator of this universe and master of this world. I know this much that Lord Rama is the Supreme Lord. Lord Krishna is the Blessed Lord. Devotee—So also is Sri Ramakrishna.

Pathak—But, we could not, at all, realise that much. Can you convince us? What is the proof that Sri Ramakrishna is the Blessed Lord?

Devotee—The proof lies in his grace and watching the Divine Sport of Sri Ramakrishna. Whenever the Lord incarnates in human form, some distinguished projection of symptom will appear in him. Do you know what is that quality? That physical frame in which there is no particular projection of symptoms at all. is the real Incarnation of Divinity in human form. No indication is at all available in an Incarnation of Divinity. Divine Incarnation is to be realised and is the subject of direct awareness. After realisation, it becomes clear that he is both with Forms as well as without Forms. This is my idea.

Thakur Paramhansha used to cite at least one symptom of a Divine Incarnation. That is this: He is the Incarnation of Divinity in human form whose whole being is inundated with love and devotion and who is constantly mad with intense love for God. So long as God-Consciousness is not attained, this Divine significance cannot be conceived.

He used to tell another side of that picture. The Divine Incarnation is like an unknown tree. There is one class of tree, which is called unknown i.e., no one can recognise it. He further cited the illustration of bull's eye lantern of the watchman and said that the Incarnation of Divinity can be seen and recognised too. The watchman usually keeps a bull's eye lantern in his hand while going on his daily round of duty for keeping a watch at night in the lanes and alleys. That lantern is called the lantern for detection in darkness. There is a special characteristic of that lantern. One who uses it, can only detect everybody with the converging light of that lantern but others cannot see him. In case, the watchman directs the light of that lantern towards himself, then only he may be exposed and recognised too. In a similar manner, the Absolute Spirit in the form of human being who is viewing the entire universe including all creatures and living beings concealing his true nature, if reveals himself by directing the beam of light towards himself, then only people can perceive and recognise him. In this connection, let me point out to vou one important thing, please hear me. Unlike all other Divine Incarnations, it is very difficult to recognise Sri Ramakrishna. There is no show of pomp and grandeur of active quality in this case. It is the manifestation of pure excellence all along. It is very very difficult to recognise and realise the greatness of the quality of pure excellence in the figure of an humble devotee. In the present case, there is neither any occasion of the killing of the demons or slaughtering the monsters like 'Aghasura' or 'Vakasura' 'Taraka' and 'Putana' etc. Seeing with their own eyes or hearing some of those incidents, the worldly people can have an idea of that Divine Incarnation. But, this time, the greatness lies in the quality of goodness and pure excellence (Sattawa). This can neither be seen by the eyes nor heard by the ears. An entirely different sort of eyes and ears are required to perceive them. Do you know what happened this time? On this occasion, the priceless jewels of the Divine storehouse which remained hidden under the waters of the

deepest boundless ocean, have been plundered. Through his ardous and ceaseless spiritual practices and prayer, Sri Ramakrishna, with his whole being, discovered the priceless jems and distributed them freely to the world like the fried rice and sweetened parched paddy. What Sri Ramakrishna has guided and taught me so far, I have come to realise and perceive that it is he who is the Blessed Lord, the Incarnation of Divinity, the Supreme Divine Spirit, the Creator of the Universe, that all powerful Rama, that Lord Krishna, that Mother Kali, as well as that non-dualistic pure existence, intelligence and bliss which is both unspeakable and unthinkable, at the same time can also be perceived by the pure mind and pure intelligence. The best way for you and me to recognise him is to observe his Divine Sport (Lila).

Pathak—You can only listen to the incidents of his Divine Sport. How can you observe them?

Devotee—When you follow that path with single minded attention you will automatically realise it. Look! What idea of that would appear like? It is like the listening to the description of the appearance of an enchaning beauty when a thought current will develop in your mind; thereafter, as a full picture of that beauty would crystalise in your mind's eye from the description of that beautiful lady; similarly, by constant hearing of the events of the Divine Sport (Lila) an idea of the Divine Sport would gradually develop; this will later crystalise into a full picture of the Divine Sport. Immediately on visualising that picture, you may be able to make out as to who is that being whose Divine Sport was witnessed.

Pathak—So many strange events have occurred in the incarnations of Lord Rama and Lord Krishna. For example, a log of wood was turned into a cork, a piece of stone was transformed into a human being, the mountain 'Govardhana' was lifted up; Lord Krishna was transformed into Mother Kali; The female demon 'Pu'ana' died, so also the King 'Kangsha' was killed and the songs celestial of the Geeta was sermonized by Krishna. What would happen in the case?

Devotee—So many more events happened on this occasion. There were many Incarnations of Divinity upto this time.

What all of them combined together have done, Sri Ramakrishna alone displayed all such incidents, nay—he has done something over and above these, something additional and afresh. Because, you have heard the stories of the Divine Incarnations, whose instances you cited, that is the reason why you believed them as the Blessed Lord. Better listen now to the events of the Divine Sport of Sri Ramakrishna and then only you will realise what Sri Ramakrishna was. When you have full faith in Lord Rama and Lord Krishna, you will be able to understand easily the Divine Sport of Sri Ramakrishna. One who can understand a single Divine Incarnation, can also understand all the Incarnations of Divinity. He, who has no faith in one Incarnation of Divinity has faith in none.

The pearls live deep inside the sea, as they do not float on the surface of the water and they can be collected only if you dive to the bottom. Similarly, if you dive deep into the sea of Divine Sport of Sri Ramakrishna, you may be able to collect many treasures and also realise that he was the mine of precious stones.

Pathak—You just said that Sri Ramakrishna performed not only what all the Divine Incarnations taken together have done. but he did go a further step beyond. In that case, do you consider that Sri Ramakrishna was greater than all the other previous—Incarnations of Divinity?

Devotee—The same Supreme Spirit exists in all the Divine Incarnations. They are different only in name and form and the Divine sport and plays are different only. Whenever a mission, is required to be fulfilled in a particular Divine Sport, at that time, he achieves his objective by becoming a particular Incarnation of Divinity. He has all the power to manifest in each Incarnation of Divinity—but it does not become necessary to do so every time.

You may understand it from the illustration of your theatre. There are many roles to be enacted in staging your drama "Jana"; but you play the role of "Bidushaka" only; in case, you are required to play the roles of a King or Siva or the Saviour of the Ganges or Arjuna, will you not be able to

do so? You are capable of doing so, but it does not become necessary always. Likewise, that Almighty Lord fulfills his mission in a particular Incarantion of Divinity what is required in a particular manifestation. Because, it became necessary to reveal all the Divine plays of all the ideal Incarnations of Divinity in the manifestation of Sri Ramakrishna, he has revealed all such aspects in him. Is there any such difference as great or small in an Incarnation of Divinity?

Pathak—I find great pleasure in your talks. As if, I am witnessing a scene. Sri Ramakrishna is the Blessed Lord. We have had the opportunity to see him some twelve to thirteen years ago and even touched him at that time but nothing happened to me by that touch.

Devotee-Please do not bear in your mind that nothing had happened to you inspite of the opportunity of seeing him. Great change has already taken place within you but you are not able to realise it. The true worth of a rare thing cannot be perceived when the same is made available easily and the ordinary people too cannot comprehend that. Will you please listen to what had happened to you? You have been emancipated from the fetters of earthly attachment; over and above this, you have been blessed with his grace. You have developed an yearning for listening to the Divine Sport (Lila) of Sri Ramakrishna. Above all, you have become keenly desirous to recognise his true self. What more can be expected in the lot of a human being? The prime goal in the life of a man is to listen patiently to the praises of the Blessed Lord and to have a God-vision. Normally, a human being is a servant of lust and gold and has great hankering for sensous pleasures and wealth. You too were all along like those people. At present, that work for which you have developed a deep adoration for the lotus feet of the Blessed Lord is the mere action of paying a visit to Sri Ramakrsihna.

Pathak—We have had the opportunity of seeing Sri Rama-krishna some twelve to thirteen years ago but why the urge to hear his sayings eagerly or to decorate his holy image with various flowers did not awaken in us so long, as is being felt at present?

Devotee—The reply to your query is this. Sri Ramakrishna used to say "a seed was lying covered in a cornice of the house. In the course of time, that building was demolished after a number of years. Only on receipt of proper heat and moisture, the seed thereafter germinated". Same is the case with you too. Now the time is propitious. The fruit of your labour is dependent on time factor.

Pathak—On hearing your re-assuring talks, we are feeling encouraged a lot and beginning to become hopeful. Our heart and soul is becoming quiet and pacified.

Devotee—These are not my sayings. Whatever I have told you they all are the teachings of Sri Ramakrishna, the spiritual guide of the world. They are merely being pronounced from my tongue! Moulds of the mouth of tiger are usually fitted at the joints of the drain on the roof. When rain water drains out through those mouths, people call that water is oozing from the mouth of the tiger. But, that is not water coming from the real mouth of the tiger; it is only rain water from the sky. I have no power, nor intelligence, nor gift of the gab of my own, they all belong to him.

There is a saying that Sri Ramakrishna is the bestower of shelter and encouragement. You are getting assurance and gaining confidence through the glory of his name. Sri Ramakrishna is full of bliss; waves of joy roll by on hearing the incidents of his Divine Sport. For this reason, you have become joyful. You are fortunate as you had the occasion to see him face to face and to touch his holy feet. Nothing is more sacred than the opportunity of eating the sacred consecrated food offered to him. Surely, you will be full of joy on hearing the events of his Divine Sport. Hearing and adoration of the events of his Divine Sport (Lila) are so beneficial that even if a person who is closely attached to wordly affairs listen to or praises and sings of his Divine Sport, he too will swim with joy in the ocean of bliss. Let me tell you in short-there is not a single human being on earth who does not feel profound joy by chanting the name of Sri Ramakrishna in simple faith. No such vice has yet been found in the world which is not reduced

to ashes immediately on uttering once the name of Sri Rama-krishna with a sincere heart. There does not yet exist is this world any of the three kinds of affliction (material, spiritual and divine) which cannot be pacified on hearing once the name of Sri Ramakrishna.

Pathak—Whether those visitors who have seen Sri Ramakrishna but could not recognise him as the Blessed Lord, in such cases, can that experience be considered as equivalent to God-vision?

Devotee-They too may be considered to have seen the Lord. Just imagine, you have arrived in Kashmir in a wintry night. You are a stranger and trying to find out a shelter there. At that hour, you met a constable in the city who, in a haste, gave you an address of a rented house. Do you know who that constable was? He was the ruler of Kashmir. He was going round the city in the garb of a constable by dressing up a few of his known people to resemble him. Now, let me ask you-plase tell me who really was the person who talked to you and gave you the address of the shelter? Because, you could not recognise him, shall I take it for granted that he was not the ruler. He was the ruler, in the dress of a constable only. Similarly, Sri Ramakrishna is the Lord of the universe, but merely in the physical form of Ramakrishna. He too, has appeared in the city of this world by dressing up his associates with the appearance of human beings. Now, you may understand whether their experience of the sight of Sri Ramakrishna is equivalent to their realisation of seeing the Blessed Lord? Pathak-You have given us a very lovely talk. It is very much encouraging to our hearts. Well, please tell me-whether seeing the Blessed Lord without recognising him, amounts to same experience as God-visson?

Devotee—Suppose a person is sleeping near an oven. At night in the state of sleepiness, in case, his hand is placed on the fire-bed, does it not get burnt? If the hand is burnt, if it is placed on the fire unconsciously, then why the effect of Godvision will not be experienced by the sight of the Lord unconsciously?

Pathak—On hearing your talks I am feeling excited in my mind. I am having a feeling that if I could recognise Sri Ramakrishna right now. Kindly, explain to me once more what is the best means of recognising him.

Devotee—I can very well understand from your earnestness that the favour of Sri Ramakrishna has been extensively showered on you. Brother! just now I explained to you that there is no special features of the incarnation of the Blessed Lord. If he graciously extends his helping hand to recognise himself, then only you can recognise him; otherwise, it is hardly possible for anybody to do so. I have heard from the holy lips of Sri Ramakrishna that when Lord Rama went into exile, seven sages only could recognise him as the Supreme Spirit (Brahman), others only knew him as Rama, the son of king Dasharatha. There is an old sanskrit Drama called "Sree Krishna Rahashya" or the Secret of Sri Krishna. It is observed therefrom that a lot of discourses were held in the Court of Kauravas whether Sri Krishna was the Supreme Being or not?

Pathak—When Sri Ramakrishna Paramhansha is such a holy man, why then the people make so many contradictory statements about him? Some people say he is a greatman. Some others say he is a sage, a few people say he is a realised soul, while a few others use such abusive language as can neither be uttered by the tongue nor can you lend ears to that.

Devotee—Human beings, though consist of the same features but vary in their inherent nature. One who has realisation of a particular form or appearance or who possesses some special inborn qualities, talks accordingly. Just listen to one of the parables of Sri Ramakrishna. One saintly person is lying on the road side being absorbed in the static state of communion with the Divine Being, unconscious of the world outside. Meanwhile, a sage while passing through that way could recognise him as a God-conscious man. He kissed the dust of his holy feet and waited on one side of the road for his regaining consciousness after the cessation of the ecstatic condition, to be of some service to him. After a while, a

drunkard came staggering and stood there. He gave a glance at that great man and said "Oh! this fellow has met with the same fate as I am in".

One more anecdote of Sri Ramakrishna-one who deals in cotton thread, just after a glance at the thread, can specify immediately which count the thread belongs to. A saintly person can only recognise a saint. Another illustration isone who has swallowed a radish, the pieces of which are rumbling in his stomach, when belches, the smell of radish would emit therefrom. Similarly, those who are engrossed heart and soul in lust and gold only, who are like the earthworm and completely attached to worldly affairs, would proclaim anything but false knowledge, is it not? One would have to close his ears on hearing their talks. You have to leave that place immediately where they live. The supreme Lord and the individual nescience (attachment for lust and gold) are entirely two separate things. He, who desires for one of the above two things, would have it. As a river can not keep in tact both the banks simultaneously, similarly an individual self can not have both these objectives at the same time. Either you accept princely wealth or start begging. Either you own a three storied building or the ground underneath a tree. Those who have enjoyed wealth and sense pleasures to their hearts content, would find severe impediments on the path of God-consciousness. There is intoxication in sensual pleasures and wealth. That intoxication makes them tipsy and does not spare an opportunity to raise their heads and they meekly submit to such addiction. As the water hyacinth covers up the surface of the water, as the clouds keep the moon out of view, similarly the cosmic nescience (Maya) conceals the Supreme Lord. As a person who has an attack of jaundice observes everything yellow only in colour, in the same way one who is overpowered with the jaundice of earthly attachment (Maya) does not view any other colour except that of sense pleasures and riches. Let me tell you another story of addiction to desperate ignorance (the individual soul's nescience). Once a person

indulges in that intoxication, his power of intelligence becomes confused, and with the aberration of the organs of cognition, he is converted into a dullard. They are not given the opportunity of realising the fact that utter ruination has befallen on them. Let me add one more thing, if a lunatic or a person haunted by evil spirit is accosted, "Hallow! how are you?" As he replies in the affiirmative stating that he is fine, so those people also will say "We are doing very well".

Now, I have answered to what you have asked. Better pause to think that unless you get over the intoxication of sensual pleasures and wealth, there are no means to tread on the path of Godliness or Super-consciousness. Such people use even filthy language at the sight of a realised person, instead of showing regard to him. Those who have deep attachment for worldly objects speak harshly about Paramhansha Deva.

Pathak—How the stupor of intoxication is dispelled please? Devotee—Sri Ramakrishna has prescribed a correct medicine for them. That medicine is easily available nowadays through his grace. The remedial medicine is, keeping-company of saintly person. The illustration cited by Thakur is—if any one who being tippled with intoxication of hemp leaves or smoking hemp has lost his senses, when fed with water mixed with rice, gets over the stupor, in the same way those who have lost their consciousness through addiction of ignorance, the only remedy lies in keeping company of the saintly and virtuous person comparable to the sure medicine of D. Gupta & Co.

Pathak—In order to get over the intoxication of lust and gold, is it necessary for people who have their family, children and other earthly possessions to renounce them all?

Devotee—Not at all—why so? Sri Ramakrishna never advised the house-holder to renounce sense pleasures and earthly possessions. But, he did advise to give up the attachment for lust and wealth from your mind. He added not to spare any place for lust and gold in your heart and soul. Just swim over the pleasures and wealth. Do you know it is like this. As no

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damage is done to a boat when it floats on water but if water is allowed to enter-inside the boat, it develops into a catastrophy. Please consider your lawfully married wife as a helper for realising God consciousness. After begetting one or two children, both of you should live as brothers and sisters and dedicate yourselves constantly to the service of the Lord. consider money as the means to earn your livilihood. household life is a very safe place to attain God consciousness. Sri Ramakrishna used to cite the illustration of household life to a fortress. As the dangerous firings of shells and mortars and other deadly weapons do not cause any harm to you while fighting from behind the protection of the fort; even, you can have your food and drinks when hungry and thirsty on the one hand, at the sametime yau may continue your fighting with the enemy on the other hand. Similarly, with an assured supply of food and daily necessacities in a household, one can have his filll in time, even no vice is committed by co-habiting with one's legally married wife. Relatives, friends and family are there to attend to you in sickness. Once you go out of your home, all these facilities are not available to you but the necessacities continue in their entirety. But there is one separate condition in it. In the first instance, you must be vigilant of the household environment and then enter into it, otherwise, there will be severe troubles. Entering the domestic world by an immatured person is equivalent to the labour of separating the seeds from the jackfruit without rubbing your palm with oil. If you rub your palm with oil and then break open the jackfruit for separating the seeds, the milky gum will not stick to your hand. In the same way, if one enters the material world with pure intelligence and devotion, then the addiction for lust and gold will not be able to confuse him. Acquire true knowledge and devotion in the first instance, thereafter enter the world (domestic).

Sri Ramakrishna's advice is—as there is no fear from the crocodile in water, by smearing the body with turmeric, so sensual pleasures and riches can do no harm in your domestic life provided your mind is full of true knowledge or wisdom and

sense of devotion and dedication. Another illustration may be quoted—in a game of hide and seek play, one who touches the grand dame need not entertain the fear of becoming a seeker again. Similiarly, after having a divine communion of the individual soul with God if one leads a family life, there need not be any fear of a slip.

In this connection, one more parable has been cited by Sri Ramakrishna-there is no chance of a fail if one goes round and round sticking and holding closely to the fulcrum; similarly, if one having attained God-consciousness, remains in the household environment, he has no fear of a fall from that position. Another example states—a villager came with a bag and an umbrella with him. There were clothings and some pocket money inside the bag. He had come here to visit the city of Calcutta. This is a marvelous city. He being a village folk, whatever is seen by him appears wonderful to him. While visiting the various objects, the evening gradually approached. Being deeply absorbed in his anxiety for a place to stay and getting a shelter, he sat at the portico of a house and within a short while fell fast asleep having been tired of walking and weary with anxiety. One cheat found out that the fellow was an idiot and decamped with his bag and the umbrella due to his carelessness. On awaking from the sleep, the man found that he has been ruined. Similarly, if those who have entered this city of domestic world, roam about without making necessary prior arrangements for their hearth and home, they will have to meet the same fate. Thakur has narrated another interesting story. During the rainy season, the farmers place athwart in the field. Observing the play of glistening light in the water inside the athwart, the small fishes entered inside but could not come out again. the same way, those who are overwhelmed with the glamour of lust and wealth of this materialistic world, without knowing the way out, enter the mesh of this household world, meet the same fate as those of the small fishes. One would have to be very cautious in his steps to enter this world. Enjoying the pleasures of lust and gold is equivalent to playing with a snakeWithout learning the remedial measures and obtaining the sacred verse from the spiritual guide for constant repetition, if anybody goes to enjoy sensual pleasures and riches, there will be no way out to save his soul.

Pathak—Does the spiritual guide teach you all these things? Well, my religious preceptor did not give any more advice than one mystical formula (hymn). Sir, then are there various types of religious guides?

Devotee-I have understood what you hint. Do you just follow clearly what are the types of religious guides and his disciples, of whom you have just spoken? It is like one blind man leading another. At the end, both of them are sure to fall down. But, if that disciple is full of love for God, then through the strength of that love, he can discover the real spiritual guide within that religious preceptor. According to our opinion, the real spiritual guide is quite distinct from the usual religious guide. Do you know who is the real spiritual guide? It is the image of your tutelary deity whom you worship. Just imagine, a bird has laid an egg. After sitting over the egg for days together, a young bird would come out of it. In this case also, exactly the same thing happens. The religious guide would initiate spiritually by uttering a mystical verse in your ears. One living diety exists within that mystical hymn. Now, after constant practice of repetition of that scared hymn, ceaseless prayer, deep meditation, and loud chanting of his praises, a clear image of your tutelary deity would emerge before you, like the coming out of the young bird after hatching of the egg. When a living deity appears before you, there remains no necessacity of a spiritual guide thereafter. When the young bird appears the egg disappears.

Pathak—If the religious guide and the tutelary deity are different, then what do you think of Sri Ramakrishna Paramhansha?

Devotee—Here, the spiritual guide and the tutelary deity are the same in the substratum of the physical body. So long he does not reveal his identity and indulges in playful sport, he is the spiritual guide. When he manifests his identity, he appears as the living deity. There, on realisation of the tute-lary deity, the image of the spiritual guide disappears, but here the case is not the same. Even on realisation of the tutelary deity the image of Sri Ramakrishna persists.

Pathak-Who may be accepted as the religious guide (Guru)? Devotee-None-except the Blessed Lord is the spiritual guide (Guru). The religious guide is one and he is the Blessed Lord. But, in order to recognise and obtain the guidance of a spiritual guide, there will be many teachers on the path of realisation who may be called acting guides. Amongst those acting preceptors, it may not be always the case that human beings only will become the guides. There may be birds, animals, trees, even creepers as well as the Gods and Goddesses. On your way to spiritual attainment, you may have close relationship with them but when the true spiritual preceptor becomes available, the close relation with these acting guides does no longer continue. Thereafter, the spiritual guide and his disciple hold together. Let me cite you an illustration as to how long the connecion lasts with an acting guide and when that connection ceases. When enquiries are made in a village for the marriage of a would-be groom, at first, a lady or a gentleman, may be of a different caste from that village, starts the negotiation. At the sight of that negotiation, the bridegroom begins to think that person has his homestead in the particular village where he would be going to marry and makes imaginary appreciation. After this, the neighbours arrive for an interview with the would-be groom. Forsaking the first match-maker, the bridegroom begins to adore those neighbours of that village in his mind, with the consolation that they are the neighbours of the family with whom the prospective marriage was going to take place. Thereafter, when the final interview became necessary, all relatives of the bride e.g. her father, uncle, elder brother or maternal uncle who are required to come, will necessarily have to come to that place. From that time, leaving aside the neighbours, the groom comes to know the father, brother or uncle of the bride. After the marriage, everybody goes out, only the bride and the bridegroom are left alone. Here also the case is the same. After the true spiritual guide (Guru) is found, none else stays in between the spiritual guide and his disciple. They only remain together.

Sri Ramakrishna says "the spiritual guide (Guru) is like the match-maker. As a match-maker is necessary to bring together the hero and the heroine; similarly, a spiritual guide (Guru) is essential to have a communion of the individual self with the universal self. That spiritual guide (Guru) is Sri Ramakrishna. Possibly, you have heard that, out of compassion if he touched anybody, that person could discover his 'Guru' within him. Who except the Blessed Lord, is capable of manifesting his Divinity. He used to reveal his identity, on his own, by touching and transmitting his power through that individual being. Let me narrate to you briefly what type of 'Guru' was Sri Ramakrishna. Just listen:

After an initial contact with Sri Ramakrishna, if any body severed his connection with him, Sri Ramakrishna did not, however, forsake him. If he became oblivous of him. Sri Ramakrishna would not forget him. If he vacillated, Sri Ramakrishna did not allow him to stagger. If anybody after accepting Sri Ramakrishna with his bond of friendship, unties that knot, he, however, never severs that tie from that person. Anybody, who once have come in contact with Sri Ramakrishna, would find obstacles in his path of lust and gold.

In an ecstatic state Sri Ramakrishna used to assure "I shall change his complexion into that of mine once whom I catch hold of". If a bright green insect catches a cockroach, the colour of the cockroach is transformed into that of the bright green fly. One more utterance of Sri Ramakrishna during his state of trance is "I am a deadly poisonous snake. He will not cry more then three times whom I have bitten once".

He, who is fortunate to receive the grace of Sri Ramakrishna as his spiritual guide (Guru), will not have to labour hard any longer in this life. He may continue enjoying a complete blissful life, dancing and singing to his hearts content rejoicing at his success. For him, the boat is already tied to the ferry ghat. He is constantly viewing the earmarked quay, the boat as well as the helmsman. He goes on unmindfully playing of his free will. He knows fully well that he will cross the waters to reach the shore whenever he wishes. He is not afraid of indulging in sportive plays in this domestic world. Earlier, while playing with his eyes closed, he had many a fall; but now he has learnt to play with his eyes open. Previously, this phenomenal world was a place of mis-conception to him, but now it is like a house for making funs.

You, too, have been able to realise something of it by this time. Just open your eyes and behold what Sri Ramakrishna is? He is not only the spiritual guide to you and me but he is the Lord of the universe. Sri Ramakrishna is like the moon in the sky available to all equally and simultanously.

Pathak—Oh! Sri Ramakrishna is in reality the Supreme Lord. What is the benefit of seeing the Lord face to face please? Devotee—Your Girish Babu is a truly devoted disciple of Paramhansha Deva; there is no better poet or dramatist like him at present. He has described in one of his books that the result of seeing the Lord Krishna is Krishna consciousness. I too hold the same view.

Pathak—This is a very encouraging utterance. Will we be able-to see the Blessed Lord again in the image of Sri Ramakrishna? Devotee—You will be able to do so certainly. If you have an extreme longing for him, you will be able to see him. You will be able to see his image also. Apart from that, he has various other appearances and aspects which you will be able to find out. He is an ocean of attributes and appearances, he has many appearances.

Pathak—We have heard about his death and final communion of his soul with the Divine. We were also present on the day when his sacred ashes were carried in a jar to Ram Babu's garden house at Kakurgachi to be preserved there. That physical body has been dissolved, how could we see that again?

Devotee-Brother, you are saying all these things thinking Sri.

Ramakrishna as a human being. I have told you repeatedly that he is the Supreme Lord. The appearance in the physical form of Sri Ramakrishna is a manifestation of his image. His body, though consists of the five primary elements. yet it is not so. The physical frame of Sri Ramakrishna consists of the external consciousness. His body is veritable spirit solidified. We have seen with our own eyes that the minutest particles and atoms of his body were made of pure consciousness. Though his sportive play in the human plane is over, yet his being has not been altogether destroyed. The body of an omnipresent Lord is never lost. The Blessed Lord fulfils the wishes of his devotees like the wish-yeilding tree. He puts on the image of the Lord in order to fulfil the longings of his devotees, but neither does he part with that image, nor has he any authority to destroy that image. The image of the Lord as we see, is not of the Supreme Spirit but that is only meant for the devotees.

In order to dispel any of your doubts, let me tell you the story of a devotee of Paramhansha Deva. Just listen please. The name of that devotee is Sri Durga Charan Nag. After the end of the sportive play of Sri Ramakrishna in the human plane (death), he became extremely restless. He gave up entirely food and drinks. Three or four days having passed in this way, the news of his fasting reached Sri Narendra Nath Dutta. Sri Narendra Nath was very soft and tender at heart. On reaching the house of Sri Durga Charan, he found that Sri Nag was lying almost dead. He tried his best to feed him but could not succeed. Thereafter, he said, "let me have something to eat." Durga Charan at once went to a shop and brought a packet of snacks for him. Whatever residual portion of the cake of flavoured pulses or the sweetmeat was tested and bitten by Sri Narendra Nath and handed over to him, he began to eat. Narendra Nath's stomach was full, how much more could he consume. The remnants of the snacks were handed over to Sri Durga Charan to eat. Shouting repeatedly "alas! my luck" hurriedly he threw away the snacks from the packet to the water of the Ganges. The next day, his neighbours, after

a lot of pursuance and insistence induced him to take boiled rice. When the rice began to boil in the pot, Sri Durga Charan taking a piece of log of thin wood cracked the boiling pot of rice and began to wail saying "Alas! my beloved Thakur has departed from this earth and I shall take boiled rice". Finding Sri Durga Charan holding fast to his point, Sri Ramakrishna granted him a direct vision. Thereafter, he started to boil his rice and eat it.

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Pathak-Oh! Such sweet and agreeable are the sayings of Sri Ramakrishna, as also are the talks of his devotees. Sir, please tell us something more about the devotees of Sri Ramakrishna. Devotee-I am too glad for your growing inquisitiveness. What a grace of Sri Ramakrishna has been showered on you that I am having a feeling of a fountain of joy within my heart to narrate his sportive plays. Thakur is graciously making me conscious of such matters of which I am not at all aware. I feel myself fortunate to have the opportunity of the company of a person like you who is keenly desirous to learn the inner truth of his sportive plays. The stories of his devotees are very pleasing, so also the sportive plays which the Thakur has played with his devotees to teach the ordinary masses, are sweeter and more pleasant. On hearing those incidents. ooze out of stones and the dead trees will sprout up green foliage; even the most worldly attached people will come to his senses and devotion will dawn in their hearts. Even, they cangather their assets to cross the ocean of this mundane world. These information and talks are fully described in "Sree Ramakrishna Puthi" and other allied books on his life. You can learn all these details about him on going through such books. Pathak-Well Sir, then tell us the incidents of this place. You just said that apart from this image of Sri Ramakrishna, thereare various other aspects and projections of Sri Ramakrishna... What are those? How and why has he been called the ocean of various forms and attributes?

Devotee—The very image of Sri Ramakrishna is pleasing to us. This appearance is the image of personal God. There is also an all pervading supreme appearance. He also has impersonal

form. He has also said that leaving aside the idea of a personal and impersonal existence of the Supreme Spirit, there is another state of his existence beyond both these states. The devotees do not like the idea of any appearance other than the familiar image of their personal God. But, he does not spare them without revealing some other forms of his existence.

Pathak—The image of personal God in the form Sri Ramakrishna is understood and we too have seen that appearance. But, how is his all pervading Surpreme appearance?

Devotee—The Cosmic form of Sri Ramakrishna is within all objects and beings of this world. That Supreme Lord in the form of Sri Ramakrishna has become diverse with his omnipresent aspects. All these animate, inanimate objects, trees, plants, hills, rivers, air and fire as well as whatever living beings you can see and hear of, are all embodied in his being. He exists both within and outside of every thing. Excepting him, nothing, nobody else exists. Whatever exist, he is within them too.

Pathak—What a strange saying! Are you talking of the teachings of the sacred scriptures and praising his glory unjustly by putting the name of Sri Ramakrishna in lieu of the Supreme Lord? Alternatively, you are narrating to me what you have experienced and seen personally.

Devotee—The glory of Sri Ramakrishna is boundless. Sri Ramakrishna is the Lord of the universe, he is the Supreme Spirit, the Sovereign King of all kings. You are thinking that I am citing all these examples as if from the scriptures! I do not know what are the sacred scriptures, nor have I heard their names, nor have had any scent of them at all. Upto this age of mine, I am neither aware of their existence nor have I gone through the Ramayana and the Mahabharata which the ordinary grocer and petty traders even know and read. When I was thirty years old, I had the fortune of seeing Sri Ramakrishna physically.

Till then I did not know whether the Kauravas and the Pandavas are mentioned in the Ramayana or the Mahabharata. One day, Sri Ramakrishna asked me whether I belonged to the

Brahma Samaj (Hindu Unitarian church)? I could not reply to his query. Until that time I had no idea of who is called Brahma, who are Shakta (followers of Divine Mother) and who are Saiva (followers of Lord Siva)? Even, I did not know who is called the Blessed Lord, nor did I know whether he exists or not. I never have given a thought about that. But, a year before I met Thakur Paramhansha Deva, my village religious preceptor initiated me to the sacred hymn of the Lord Krishna by uttering the same into my ear. When he initiated me into that mystical verse, I frankly told him that although I have recited that mystical verse repeatedly for long, yet I had not had the vision of the image of Lord Krishna at all. He replied that it would hardly be practicable for you, since repetition of the name of the deity attended with burnt offerings and so many other rites and rituals would have to be performed before that becomes possible! You better live on the bank of the Ganges and repeat the mystical verse twelve times only after taking a bath. I became bewildered on hearing these. Since that day, a passionate longing grew in my heart as to how I could see the image of the Lord Krishna, play with him and enjoy the sweet molasses and bread together with his company. This yearning dawned in my mind not because Krishna is the Blessed Lord or Lord Krishna is the helmsman to steer the voyage of life. It happened because I realised Krishna as Lord Krishna, and that he is very handsome. I had an inclination to snatch away the flute from his hand and cause him to cry aloud. I had a strong urge to perceive his body as soft as the cream and to stroll to and fro carrying him on my arms; further, I thought of decorating him with beautiful flowers. Since bread and molasses are my favourite snack, I thought I would prepare the snack and sit with him to enjoy the lunch. There were so many ideas in my mind of which how many shall I narrate to you! Then, I used to consider myself as belonging to the caste of milkmen. If anybody would point out that he was coming from Vrindaban (the abode of the God of love) a district of Mathura, and that he was an inhabitant of that sacred place 'Vraja Bhumi', I immediately used to ask him if 'Kanai' (Krishna) was all right? Occasionally, I used to

talk to myself unwittingly mingling the language of Bengali with that of Hindi in the way the inhabitants of 'Vraja' did. I used to compose songs about 'Kanai' and used the dialect of the Vaishnava poets in imitation of Maithili in the songs. Now, I have arrived at the feet of Sri Ramakrishna. practice grew firmer than ever before by coming in contact with Sri Ramakrishna. Having met Sri Ramakrishna for three consective days, I came to a definite conclusion that if any one could infuse in me the vision of Krishna, it was he and none else. At that time. I did not realise that one who was Krishna was Sri Ramakrishna himself. Can you conceive how firm is my knowledge about Lord Krishna now? I do not know that Krishna is an appreciator of pleasant sportiveness, I do not know whether Krishna was the charioteer of the Pandayas or the killer of the King Kansha, nor do I know that Krishna was the principal person in the sacrificial rites of 'Pravasha' and whether he acted in the drama of Dwarka or not? I can recognise 'Kanai' as the darling (Sapphire) of mother 'Jashoda', the companion of the cow-herds who plays with the flute, steals the butter from his mother's store, goes to tend the cattle in the pasture. Every one in 'Gokula' loves him dearer than their own selves. 'Radha' loves him with a far greater intensity; He is very attractive. I know about all these qualities. Let me recite a song when only you will be able to follow the spirit behind all these ideas:

"He who is the moon of Vrindaban is going,
He is the cowherd who is going,
The fascinating darling is going,
Our Krishna is going.
His forehead is decorated with ornamental
designs of sandal wood paste,
a garland of wild flowers is adorning his neck;
His hair resembling the lightning mesh,
the Charmer of Gopies (milk maids) is passing this way.
A beautiful crest of peacock-feather is worn
by him in the front of his forehead,
undulating in the wind.

The milkmaids are enjoying the sight without turning their gaze for twinkle of an eye.

The jingling anklets are ringing with musical tone with each foot step, while he's smiling and dancing amongst the cowherd boys, just as the moon shines amongst the stars in the sky, and sends forth its searching light.

The cows are all going ahead of him, while he is playing the flute from behind them,

I wish, how can I ever get Krishna within my fold, the charming player of the flute."

How far I have treaded while talking about by knowledge of the scriptures.

Pathak-This is a very amusing story, please continue. I find the shining glory of Sri Ramakrishna in these talks. Devotee-I have neither put any question to Sri Paramhansha nor had any talk with him even for a single day but I was well aware that as soon as he placed his hand on the chest of anybody, that person became totally insensible to the outside world and the vision of the Lord Krishna revealed to him in that state. I started to pay a visit to him with this expectation in mind, not that it was the only desire but the very sight of him made me so different that I used to go there with an earnest longing as to when he would graciously place his palm on my chest. A long time elapsed but he did not place his palm at all my chest. I did go there with expectation but came back crying with disappointment. I had the occasion to speak to him only two words in my life. Once I could get an access to him in solitude and prayed to him saying "Thakur, I am totally blind". In reply he said-On another day, I lamented to him thus-'God exists'. "Thakur, you did not take the 'kulfi' (ice cream) because it was touched by me, so I am guilty". He replied with a little smile on his face "Had you brought the 'Kulfi' ice-cream at noon I would have taken it. I do not take it at night, because consuming of such cold ice-cream at night cause indisposition of health, that is why, I have not consumed it". Had Thakur behaved with any other person in the manner he dealt with

me he would never visit Thakur again even at the risk of his life. So many people used to caress his feet with their hands, but as soon as I advanced towards him to touch, he used to withdraw his feet saying "that was sufficient." Sometimes, when I tried to kiss the dust of his holy feet, he at once withdrew and added "It is sufficient". I could not follow at all, the various spiritual matters on which he used to speak out. Normally, I used to sit on a side and watch him only. I was afraid of Thakur in the same way as I was full of fear for my own father. I could get a resemblance of the face of my father in that of Thakur and till now discover the similarity of the two. How much shall I tell you, there are so many narratives. My scripture is Sri Ramakrishna and my thought is Ramakrishna Deva. My study of the scriptures is my vision of Sri Ramakrishna. Whatever I am saying is what he is directing. I have not placed and compared Sri Ramakrishna with any other's status. I am identifying and placing Sri Ramakrishna in his own place. Whatever I am seeing, I am relating to you.

Pathak—It is a strange phenomenon that you are perceiving Ramakrishna Deva in every human being—in case, it is he who has become every living being or every object—in that event, whether Sri Ramakrishna has become the part or whole of all such objects or living beings?

Devotee—As small alphabets can not be studied without learning the big ones or capital letters, so you cannot comprehend the supreme appearance unless, in the first instance, you get to know him as your ideal deity. Listen to what I have seen: if innumerable small and big receptacles are immersed in the water of the sea, as the sea-water remains in every pot, so I discover Ramakrishan Deva in every etherial object. You yourself may, now, understand whether he is in part or the—Summum Bonum.

But you are observing the instances of small or big receptacles; some may hold a smaller quantity while others may hold a larger quantity of water, the difference lies in the quantity only which is the sportive play of the eternal energy. Pathak—If sea water fills every pot of individual self then

why some are good, others bad, some honest and a few are dishonest, why so much differences exist?

Devotee-That is due to inherent qualities. Ramakrishna Deva said-water itself is god-incarnate. But, this water may be of different variety. You may wash your hands and feet only in some water, take your bath only in some other water. Some water is so much holy and pure that you can be purified of your undoings of past births by a mere touch or a sip of a drop of that. While there is some specimen of it which you can not even touch. Likewise, Rama exists in every living being. Within some one, he is honest Rama, in others he is lascivious Rama, and in some other he is a thief Rama. You have to adore some Rama and keep away from some other Rama. Ramakrishna Deva narrated a further illustration. That mother Kali exists as a deity in some temple holding the sacrificial knife; in some place she is staying as a domestic bride with a long veil and in another place she is working in a verandah with a huble-bubble in her hands. "Whatever the Universal will shall wish, She will exist in every object of the universe". Until the grace of Sri Ramakrishna is showered, you will not be able to understand all these play of the cosmic energy.

Pathak—When the Blessed Lord has been and become everything, and exists as the consciousness in every object, why then there appears no play of consciousness in a stone or hillock? No doubt, the body of an individual being is a dead matter, but consciousness can be perceived through the interplay of its actions.

Devotee—If you convert milk into its whatever form such as, curd, butter, ghee, and thickened milk etc., as milk is pervading in all these forms or each of these products is a different state of the same milk; so also, whatever has been created in the world, they are from the root conscious Supreme Spirit. He exists in every such thing or every thing is a different state of that one consciousness. He is both the contents as well as the container or substratum. In the gross from, he is the constituent of the physical body, and in the subtle state, he is the embodied vital spirit or soul. In this crea-

tion, as the very subtle state of consciousness is the infinite space, the gross form of the infinite space is the vast sky, the gross form of that sky is fire, that of fire is air, that of air is water and the gross form of water is the earth. In this way, in the case of individual being's body, the subtle state is the Supreme Spirit, its gross form is the individual or sentient soul; the gross state of the individual soul is the mind, intelligence, reflection of spirit and egoism; their gross form is the physical body, composed of five primary elements. What a strange sportive play of the cosmic nescience (Maya). Pathak—Just now you stated that these are all the play of the Blessed Lord and now you are saying all these are play of the cosmic nescience? I have heard that (Maya) cosmic nescience is mere deceptive, transient, transitory and conjuring.

Devotee-That primordial energy with whose association the Blessed Lord who is the most subtle consciousness and beyond the reach and concept of human mind, has evolved as the living being as well as this universe, is called the cosmic nescience (Maya). As the Blessed Lord is eternal and true, his nescience is also true and eternal. Whatever is born out of truth and eternity, can that be untrue and transitory? That inferior power of insentience (Maya Sakti) is the sportive energy of the Almighty. He indulges in sportive play with that energy. Though this delusive power is under the control of the Almighty Lord, yet its greatness surpasses the glory of the Supreme Being. If there is no sportive play of this cosmic nescience, the existence of the Almighty cannot be perceived by any one except the Lord himself. Without the sportive play of the cosmic nescience, this creation does not exist; in other words, all these living beings and the universe do not exist. If there are no living beings, the Almighty Lord cannot be perceived even if he is there. As the light of the full moon is to a person who is blind since his birth, so the existence of God appears non-existent, though he may be there if the living beings do not exist at all. The energy of cosmic. nescience, by her creation helps the living beings to feel her own existence by becoming their Supreme Mother and there-

after points out their attention towards the Almighty. As an image can be seen with the help of a mirror, likewise the individual souls, after being created with the help of cosmic nescience are able to see God face to face with her assistance. Unless the cosmic nescience removes the veil and clears the path, the embodied self cannot get a direct vision of the Supreme Lord. The power of delusion (Maya) is both willful and playfull. Though two in one, yet she acts in both ways. One is the enlightening power and the other is that of ignorance or projecting false appearance. There are two aspects of the same power, do you know how? There is an illustration cited by Sri Ramakrishna on this subject. Cats have the same set of teeth. When they grasp their own kittens and reach them to a safe place, those very teeth do not bite the neck of the kittens. But, when they prey on a mouse, there is no limit to the suffering of that mouse. Similarly, when the cosmic nescience (Maya) engulfs the human mind with its illuminating power, she guides the individual self to the path of God-consciousness. But, when that same energy predominates individual soul with ignorance or delusion, she stupefies him totally and throws him hand and feet tied together into the troubled water of this mundane world.

I have described how Sri Ramakrishna has appeared as the Universal Being with the help of his sportive play by becoming the individual being and the living world. He used to say that the formless state of that Supreme Spirit cannot be described through these lips. In that state, there is no living being, this world, no embodied soul, no creation—every thing disappears into oblivion. In that condition, as you have heard, the cosmic nescience is unreal and magical.

Cosmic nescience (Maya) though deceptive but true, at the same time is real and delusive. Sri Paramhansha Deva cited an unique judgment on this alluring subject. He used to say "When I am seeing distantly this world and all living beings before my eyes, how can I say that they are all unreal. Then again, the opinion of that great Acharya Shankara is this. According to his opinion this world and all the living beings do not exist. The final decision may be stated as "that is

correct and this is also correct". The manifestation of God is endless. If it is argued that God is like this and not like that, or cannot become anything else, then you conceive him as limited and finite. There is no end of the manifestation of the Almighty. The final decision of Thakur is—He can become anything and everything; all projections, aspects and attributes are possible in His case.

Pathak—Paramhansha Deva is such a Lord! Well, you just said that Ramakrishna Deva is the same Lord Rama and Lord Krishna, but I do not find any supernatural power or outer appearance or dress like theirs. Moreover, people too do not admit accordingly. But, now-a-days—yes, there is a lot of discussion about him in so many places.

Devotee-In the beginning you said so and again you are raising similar question now. You still have some doubt about Sri Ramakrishna. You better pray to him. He will explain to you himself and show you the way. Summing up the position let me tell you one thing. Forms and appearances differ with the various incarnations of Divinity. In the incarnation of Rama, the appearance was that of Rama, so in the incarnation of Krishna, the image was that of Sree Krishna and now in the incarnation of Ramakrishna, the appearance is that of Sri Ramakrishna. The appearance and form do not become identical and their aims and method of performance are also not similar. There are two types of Avataras or Divine Incarnations. One type appears to relieve the universe of its maladies, to protect the holy and saintly souls and to punish the wicked. Another type of incarnation is called the ideal manifestation. The work of this Incarnation of Divinity is to re-establish religion and righteousness, enlighten the individual souls and uplift the lowly and down-trodden. In the ideal incarnation, though the majesty and attributes remain there but are not revealed; the splendour of dress persists but does not exhibit, only the sublime peace and tranquility remains there-The ideal Divine Incarnation is rich in unostentation and fascinating without external beauty. Let me quote what "Sri Sri Ramakrishna Puthi" has described in this connection, Listen to this : " as belot of the mid-of- look

THE GLORY OF SRI RAMAKRISHNA

"Oh! sceptical mind, what shall I tell you
Eternally steeped art thou in the mud of doubt.
If you have no faith, what harm is done to me?
I know my master is the Lord of the Universe.
He is the leader, saviour, protector, pointer of the true

path

by dwelling in our heart, the helmsman in our voyage through the sea of the world to cross. He is my precious jewel, my faith, my strength, intelligence and soul, my support, resource, and freind in weal and woe. Let no doubt arise in my finding out the real truth. by seeing the outer grandeur as you do. Let my great master be a Brahmin priest, taking shelter in other's place or maintained at other's cost. May he be posing as an illiterate, unpleasing to the sight, bereft of qualities or highly maddened person. Let him be an embodied soul of five earthly elements, With an appearance of a poor degenerated Brahmin behaving like a small child. May he be short of adequate dress and decoration, looking like an ordinary fellow suffering from acute pain in his throat with a frail and ematiated body. I shall adore and worship my Lord Thakur, without discriminating what does he possess or not. Would you desire to see the gaudy dress, ornaments, outer show of pomp and wealth, beautiful appearance with the colour of the skin akin to the blades of newly grown grass. the plait of hair elongated, ears bedecked with rings of precious gems and crown beset with various jewels, accompanied by elephants and horses at each step, with bows and arrows fitted with quiver on his back, on his left the daughter of King Janaka, the golden coloured respectable Sita, who was won over by fixing the string of the great bow 'Hara'? Oh! my mind, you are being deceived finding him bereft of pomp and grandeur.

That Lord Rama is shrouded in the garb of Sri Ramakrishna.

Would you desire to see the feather of peacock over his head-dress and ornamental decorations of sandal paste over his beautiful forehead, the rare large pearl dangling over the pointed nose of the ideal deity or the precious jewel of Lord Narayana (as the Puranas describe) be hanging on his neck just like the moon-lit winner, his eyes elongated upto the ears, slightly carved and beautiful,

the body coloured blue and adorned with sandal paste, his bewitching yellow dress wrapped in haste, with the charming flute held in his hand, his body twisted in three bends owing to attractive love

of Sri Radha, ne minds of

the lewd Krishna in blue attire, winning the minds of the Gopies (milk maids), his garland made of wild flowers hanging round his neck upto his feet, the body adorned with wild fruits and yellow flowers, his feet embellished with jingling golden anklets producing sweet musical sound, whose feet appear like red lotus,

a cluster of lotuses blooms with each of his foot-steps and swarm of bees rushes towards him for the sweet fragrance of the nector of flowers? Oh! my mind, you are being deceived at the sight of want of grandeur,

though the same Lord Krishna is covered with the appearance of Sri Ramakrishna.

That Rama and that Krishna are revealed in the form of Ramakrishna.

He is busy with a different Divine Sport in another form. This transformation of appearance does not indicate any qualitative change, since his Divine Sport is the witness and identity of the Lord.

Whenever a particular form and attire is necessary

the Divine Incarnation descends in this world in that appearance and dress.

Some divine energy manifests in its mission with equal intensity irrespective of majestic appearance or total absence of grandeur".

Whatever appearance is assumed by the Blessed Lord, all his manifestations are embraced in that form. Was not the image of Krishna within that old, infirm dwarf when he approached the house of the munificent Karna? In the incarnation of Lord Krishna, the monkey chief Hanumana had to be satisfied with the manifestation of the appearance of Rama. Sri Ramakrishna too revealed various manifestations to his different devotees. This has been exhaustively described in the book called 'Sri Sri Ramakrishna Puthi'. The devotees of Sri Ramakrishna do not desire to see any form of the Lord other than Sri Ramakrishna. Once Thakur asked Girish Babu, whether he would like to see any particular appearance? In reply he (devotee) asked him whether he would remain inside that form? The Lord replied "Why should I after all, exist therein?" The devotee retorted "in that case, I do not want to see that form". There is no greater scepticism in God than to test the Blessed Lord when he is visioned in a form different from the usual one. In order, however, to dispel suspicion from the sceptical mind, Sri Ramakrishna has appeared before various tests and revealed various forms.

If you see Sri Ramakrishna, you have seen all the incarnations of Divinity. Once you understand him, you get to know all the Vedas, the Vedantas, the Puranas of the Hindus and the true significance of all other religions of the world. The whole universe is pervading in the causal body of Sri Ramakrishna—nay, all the creation is within him.

Alas! how charming is that frame in Divine trance, with the face having the radiance of the moon.

When the Divine light shines in gusts on it, how magnificent does it look?

At the sight of that beaming face like the moon, the heart's love and devotion rush towards him dispelling all ignorance.

Those who live by the two sides of the stream, even of

far distant places, are swept away by the strong current of his influence. The waves of the spiritual stream rush towards various paths that no body knows, these are not even included in the dispensation of God. Maya is the power of the Almighty, her glorious acts are marvellous and bewildering but shrouded in the garb of sportive play. The sun stays far away in the sky, but in what a strange way does it attract the saline water of the sea into the sky and transform the same into crystal clear water by unseen process to quench the thirst of the swallow. On earth they are all stream of water, but they indulge in sportive play in the ethereal sky by change of name as clouds. These are great majesty and nothing can be readily understood, who is spirit behind and where does he live? There is only one underlying energy at the root, which indulges in cooking a creation of thousands of varieties. Both the realities are the same and wonderful in the universe; bravo! the power to eternal energy is

indescribable.

One does not resemble the other, each is different in quality, form and complexion.

All objects are indestructible, none is inferior or superior except in quality and appearance.

That eternal energy at whose command, the four faced Lord Narayana and Lord Maheswara appear and dissolve into it, is fully at the services of our master, day and night with folded hands, in the play ground of his Divine Sport.

Such is our master, the Lord of the universe, who can conceive the extent of his Divine play; his domain does not end, where the sky meets the earth.

The Kingdom of Divine Sport of our Lord is unknowable

THE GLORY OF SRI RAMAKRISHNA

and most astonishing, since no idea can be formed of its beginning and end, in him all the Avataras (Divine Incarnations) live safely with constant folded hands.

Sri Ramakrishna is the king of kings, whose verdict in all quarrels, differences and enmity is satisfactory to all.

He does not destroy an iota of the inherent nature of an individual but preserves that all with equal importance. The activities (of Lord Krishna) in Gokul, the teachings of Vedanta as well as the other precepts, opinions, and ways whichever have been prescribed from time immemorial, our master, the universal spiritual guide nourishes and protects them with equal care and respect from the bosom of his heart.

Everything of Sri Ramakrishna is supernatural. His whole life is full of transcendental events. He has nothing ceremonial at all. Uptil-now, nothing has been disclosed at all about him. When I will narrate his Divine Sport, I shall show you that he alone has done/performed all the different achievements in his life, what all the Incarnations of Divinity who appeared in this world before him have done. Rather, he has done more than what all of them could do together. Now, I am telling you only one or two preachings of Sri Ramakrishna, like the preachings of the Gita. These celestial preachings are the great sacred texts (maha mantra) of Sri Ramakrishna. He narrated the essence of universal religion in thoseteachings. The dew of the winter season falls in minute trickles but the penetrating power of that dew is so great that it impregnates even the hard stone. Similarly, such an intrinsic power is concealed in the very simple celestial preachings and sincere teachings of Sri Ramakrishna that even in case, a stone-hearted earth-bound soul listens to them, those teachings will penetrate deeply into the core of his heart through his veins, muscles, bones and marrow.

One cannot truly understand a particular subject unless he examines it thoroughly. Uptil-now, the people of this country could not find out the greatness of Sri Ramakrishna.

because none of them has paid a visit to him. Living within the personified blazing glory of Sri Ramakrishna, if some one declares that he had not felt/seen anything great in him, is equivalent to saying that one is not feeling cold at all, while standing on the highest peak of the Himalayas. Those who do not feel cold in such a place, it should be understood, in their case that they have developed abnormality in their body.

A humble son of a Brahmin, a simple priest of a place of worship belonging to an uneducated lady of Kaibarta family expressed such straight and simple ideas, manifested such a life that gaining a glimpse of them, the top most scholars, scientists, religious teachers of the various developed countries of the world are getting bewildered. Even, some of them after crossing the seven seas are coming to this country, with due humility, to find out with great regard the place of his Divine Sport-i.e. where he lived, where he sat and reclined at rest, who used to stay with him, who were the other persons that knew him thoroughly. Thousands of people are taking away for preservation the leaves of the tree under which Sri Ramakrishna has prayed constantly and undergone spiritual practices (Sadhana) for years and realised the true underlying significance of the various religions. They are carrying the sacred soil of that seat of self-realisation to their individual places of residence and feeling themselves more purified and sublime by preserving such leaves and sample of soil in the glass cases. The people of those countries who consider the Hindus as degraded and weak, even inferior to the meek animals, who hate them from the core of their hearts, as idolater in religious belief, those who for a long time arranged to send their religious preachers and clergies for enlightenment of the Hindu minds, such seekers after truth of those very enlightened countries are now worshipping Sri Ramakrishna with sincere devotion. Is is not far more supernatural than a miraculous event?

When the wise and learned people of foreign lands have realised Sri Paramhansha Deva so much adorable and and worthy of worship, it should then be understood that they have found out a new light in his life. Now, let me ask you what is that soul which can enlighten with the same intensity the hearts of all races, of all countries, of all religious followers, and of all spiritual seekers? Even the dour stupid and spot blind will have to admit that he is the universal spiritual guide in the form of Sri Ramakrishna. That uncle moon is Sri Ramakrishna Deva. I shall narrate later to the best of my ability what religion he did preach. Is it not his glory that Lord Rama and Lord Krishna have entranced the whole world in the appearance of Sri Ramakrishna? If people of this country are unable to perceive this fact it may be said, there have been abnormalities of the eyes and ears or perversion of intelligence; or for some strange reasons there have been obstacles on their way for seeing and hearing things in their true perspective.

It will amount to a tall talk on my part as a child, if I say that there have been perversion of intelligence and abnormalities of the eyes and ears of thousands of people. But, this much is within my right if I say that those who want to test Ramakrishna Deva should approach him with a simple heart, open mind and natural intelligence. That intelligence which prompts people to lose sight of the Blessed Lord, that understanding which conceives slander and interference of the weakness of the masses as true talks, that intellect which makes a. man sit gravely with a sense of profound peace and tranquility, although his heart is burning simultaneously with the fireof hatred and malice, that intelligence which leads to an understanding of accepting hypocrisy and treachery as equivalent towearing of a necklace of pearls, that learning which accepts a slave of passion and wealth as a respectable person in society, that knowledge which holds a person as glorified even when he is imbibed with a sense of animality instead of humanism, that intellect which can not make at least once a stirring call to 'Mother' with the fullness of heart, when such a crooked, unholy shrewd, mean-minded fellow goes to visit that truer than truth, purer than holy, sublimer than sublime Sri Ramakrishna, what will he observe? Such person will find him as a priest of the temple of a 'Kaibarta' by caste, a mad man, a spiritual guide of the land of vile, stupid, vagabond, way-ward outcast persons.

who have been driven out by their parents and also as a man who died of a throat disease.

I have told you of the aberration of the eyes and ears of common folk. Now, listen to what has obstructed their vision. On a summar day in Dakshineswar, a few devotees sat around Sri Ramakrishna in a cool shady place of the 'Pancha-Vati' (assemblage of the five sacred trees). Various spiritual discussions were going on, when in course of the talks, comments about the residents of Ariadaha, Dakshineswar and Baranagar arose. They were hypocritical and curious of Thakur. Out of curiousity, one devotee asked Thakur "why the people of the above places do not come here when others of far distant places are finding their peace and tranquility of mind by coming over here?" Instead of replying verbally, Thakur pointed him to a cow which was tied to a wedge. was fastened by a rope on the bank of the bed of the river Ganges. Now, it was getting restless at the sight of the rushing water of the Ganges. None of the devotees could follow the implications of his reply by seeing the cow. What greatness of Sri Ramakrishna is! In the mean time, four or five free cows descended in the river bed and quenched their thirst to their hearts content by drinking the water of the river and returned to the shore. Thakur, thereafter explained to them that the cow became very thirsty but it could not drink the water although it was so near, because of bondage. But these cows were free, so they drank the water as soon as they felt thirsty. These residents of this place were under worldly bondage, so they cannot come here.

In this connection, Thakur used to tell another story—"light spreads outwards away from the lantern but darkness prevails underneath it. Likewise, people nearer to a saint cannot understand him fully though others far away from him are attracted by his ideas." Thakur used to cite another illustration. He added, "the seeds of the Banyan tree do not drop just under the tree but are scattered miles apart and fresh plants grow there. In the same way, the thoughts and ideas of great men receive appreciation in distant places and such people adore him."

The final summary emerges as under—human beings belong to four different categories. Eternally free, liberated, desirous of salvation and worldly attached. Those who are eternally free, do not get themselves entrapped at all in the net of cosmic nescience (Maya). The liberated soul frees himself out of the dragnet by detaching himself from the net work. But the souls desiring salvation, try to find out ways and means to remove the bondage by cutting the chains and the earth-bound souls remain confined in the bondage and never try to come out of it, rather they prefer to remain embeded and hidden in the mud. The symptom of a worldly attached person is his ignorance of other things of the world than the usual sexual desires and wealth. He considers the essence of life is to earn money, eat, rub his body with oil, put on dress and multiply his off-spring.

As the devil does not listen to the holy scriptures, similarly the worldly self can not pay any attention to the sublime spiritual discussions, rather he will say-"what is the good of listening to such teachings; rather, let us go somewhere else for light amusements". Some will say-"let us attend to our domestic work, there will be enough time left to listen to such things in future; the old age is the proper time to attend to such things". Those who talk in that manner are a chip of the old block. Others often utter such remarks that one has to expiate after hearing them They say "when the Lord Krishna indulged in such things, those acts were called Divine Sport but if we are involved in them, it will amount to our wickedness". Even if Lord Krishna himself would appear standing with a flute in his hand. a plume of feathers in his crown and Sreemati Radha on his left, such people would not still believe in his presence—they would rather address him "well! which theatre do you belong to? Your make up and dress are lovely". To have firm faith in the Incarnation of Divinity is very difficult. Doctor Sarkar was a very renowned person of high standing, but he told Thakur that Rama who killed 'Bali' with a secret arrow, sent his wife who was pregnant with a five months child to wilderness, can not be called the Blessed Lord.

Let me tell you of another obstacle on this path. People of this place learn a lot of book knowledge. Every one is of pedantic nature. Their heart is full of egoism for their scholarship from extensive book learning. Those who are modest and devoid of vanity for their erudition possess true knowledge. The clot of ignorance is unfolded by such a knowledge. Education aims at that goal. It will lead to the path of that lofty ideal knowledge but where the egotism of learning is dominant, the twine of individual nescience (Avidya) will encompass it with a greater degree. He is not aware at all that utter ruination has grappled him by such egotism of scholarship. Pride and vanity is the real bane in the way of God-consciousness. This self conceit is the ignorance personified.

This self elation and pride develop in various ways. It grows not only by the grace of the Goddess of Learning but also to a greater extent through the gift of the Goddess of Riches. Again, where the Twin Sisters meet, we need not talk of such a situation at all. Vanity develops out of high status and family tradition. Ignorance has spread its cord of various colours in different directions. It has over-powered and controlled people as it has got hold of them.

Pathak—What have you narrated about Paramhansha Deva's exposing himself to various tests? What sort of ordeal has he undergone?

Devotee—That is a long story! well listen! On the repeated insistence of Rani Rashmoni, the elder brother of Paramhansha Deva undertook to perform the daily service and religious rites of Mother 'Bhabatarini', in the temple house of Mother Kali at Dakshineswar. At that time, Paramhansha Deva used to stay with his elder brother from time to time. One day, when he was strolling in the compound, at that moment Mathur Babu was totally captivated from the core of his heart at the very sight of that world fascinating figure of Sri Ramakrishna with a wide chest, slightly reddish lips, delicately carved eyes and arms elongated upto his knees resembling an early rising sun. After accosting other people with such eagerness, he came to learn that the dignified person was the younger brother of the

grand priest of the Kali Temple. With due humility, Mathur Babu insisted on the elder priest to bring his younger brother by his side and engage him in the service of the daily worship of Mother Kali. The elder brother having disclosed the sincere desire of Mathur Babu to his younger brother, the reply from the latter was "I shall neither go to that rich man nor engage myself in the performance of the priestly duties of the deity". Mathur Babu remained silent for a while after being unsuccessful in persuading him, to the best of his ability, to this matter.

Thakur Ramakrishna knew from his boyhood, the art of making beautiful idols of various gods and goddesses. He possessed a rare capacity and unique excellence in the ceremony of anointing the eyes of an earthen idol at the time of consecration. After the anointing ceremony being over, the earthen idol would appear to be a living deity. In the countryside, if an idol was to be given a final shape for worship, in the first instance, it was to be shown to 'Gadai Thakur' for approval. The name of Thakur in his infancy was 'Gadai'. He used to point out the particular defect in the shape of an idol and no body would become satisfied until the ceremony of anointing its eyes was

performed by him.

Ramakrishna built a model of a bull and Lord Siva with the clay of the Ganges and kept them at a place where his elder brother used to stay. Accidentally, they caught the eyes of Mathur Babu. On seeing the idols of Siva and the bull, Mathur Babu considered them as living figures and conveyed the news about the person who moulded and shaped those model idols to Rani (Lady) 'Rashmoni' and showed her those specimens. He further told her that if that person who gave shape to these idols was entrusted with the service of the daily worship of Mother Kali, he would be able to enliven Mother Kali into a lively deity in no time. With this in mind, he specially requested the elder brother of Thakur entreating him saying "you will have to engage your younger brother for the daily service of Mother Kali as a priest". On the repeated urging of his elder brother, Thakur could not refuse him but said in reply if 'Hridu' is also appinted as an assistant to

him, he would only then agree to the proposal. On hearing his reply, Mathur Babu became exceedingly delighted and engaged 'Hridu' and Thakur for the priestly duties after fixing their monthly emoluments.

Mathur Babu listened occasionally to the divine conversations and highly sweet and melodious songs of Thakur. In this way, some time elapsed.

Thakur became the dresser of Mother Kali. Every day, he used to make new dresses of the Mother. The Rani and Mathur Babu became fascinated at the sight of those decorations. Thereafter, Thakur took up the work of daily service. While performing the priestly rites and service every day, various thought waves passed through his mind. Sometimes, it appeared to him that the world outside does not exist. At other times, he became oblivious even of the existence of his body. The mind ran after the Mother and his tongue cried for her in deep longing. At times, so deep was his wailing for the Mother that tears rolled down his eyes on to the floor. Sometimes, he only fanned the Mother with a 'Chowrie'. At other times, he would stand holding a piece of sugar-candy and butter before the mouth of the Mother Kali and entreat "Mother, please take it". Occasionally, while performing the usual rites and rituals of daily service, instead of placing the flowers at the feet of the Mother, he used to deposit them over his own head and sit there completely in a state of deep trance. At times, he used to hold a piece of cotton before the nostrils of the Mother Kali to find out whether she was actually inhaling and exhaling. On certain days, at the end of the waving of lights before the shrine, although the sound of the bell ringers and plate of bell metal stopped and the concerted drum music became also silent, but even then the waving of light of the five candles before the deity to the accompaniment of bells by Thakur did not stop. As if, Thakur was converted into a mechanical doll! Hridaya could understand that Thakur was in a state of trance and held him firmly when he became unconscious. The other priests of the Kali Temple took this symptom as his epileptic fit. So long, Thakur was can ordinary human being in the eyes of the comman man, but from now on, he was taken for granted as a mad man. When some one's nature does not coincide with that of common people, he is mistaken as a person turned insane.

Gradually, there were outbreaks of emotional trance and ecstatic state of superconscious communion with the infinite source of pure existence, intelligence and bliss within Thakur on a number of times during the day. The other priests of the Kali Temple now firmly believed that Thakur was, by that time, attacked with fits of epilepsy and insanity! They began to complain to Mathur Babu that Thakur was a good for nothing fellow. Mathur Babu began to reflect about various possibilities in his mind on the complaint but did not dare say anything outwardly.

What a glory of Sri Ramakrishna! In the mean time, a Brahmin lady came to Dakshineswar. This Brahmin lady was superbly commanding and forceful. All the books about devotional path, Tantric Scriptures, and Hindu Puranas were memorized by her. She was thoroughly accquainted with the various methods of spiritual practices according to Tantric rites. Once Thakur remarked about that Brahmin lady that she was the embodiment of the four Vedas. The Brahmin Lady could recognise from the appearances of the State of ecstatic joy and transcendental communion with the Divine, in the frame of Thakur that he was the Blessed Lord; she thereafter began to propagate that news within the precincts of the Kali Temple. But, at first, no body paid any heed to the observations of the Brahmin Lady. Thereafter, when she began to quote long verses from the scriptures as proof, then Mathur Babu became surprised. He was taken aback when it was found that the Brahmin Lady was thoroughly conversant with the scriptures. In order to test the authenticity of her statement, he invited profoundly learned scholars in Hindu religion and engaged them in a debate about the correctness of her points of view. The Goddess of Learning, as if, physically presented herself in the vocal cords of the Brahmin Lady. No scholar could defeat her with any argument. She advanced the various descriptions and evidences laid down in the scriptures as also the different symptoms of the state of emotional trance and

transcendental realisation and compared these symptoms with those of Paramhansha Deva during his state of ecstatic joy and supreme-realisation to prove that Thakur was the Blessed Lord. Those scholars found that the symptoms of Thakur were all coinciding with those described in the scriptures but still they did not agree that he was the Blessed Lord. Mathur Babu began to have a firm faith in the words of the Brahmin Lady consequent to the defeat of the scholars in such arguments, and his love and devotion towards Thakur increased immensely. Since then he released Thakur from the daily priestly service of Mother Kali. As arrangements were made for the daily service and worship of Mother Kali, similar arrangement was made by him to attend to Thakur as well as for his resting place and residence on the first floor of his own dining room. However, it may be, the human instinct of Mathur Babu was raising its head of doubt from time to time. He tested Thakur at night time by bringing prostitute girls and sending them to him.

Pathak—What was the reaction of Paramhansha Deva at the sight of those prostitutes?

Devotee—As a simple child cries out shouting Oh! Mother, Oh! Mother, repeatedly, and shrinks with fear at the sight of a dreadful female demon in a lonely place, similarly Thakur became totally unconscious crying for Mother—Oh! Mother! Pathak—How did those prostitutes behave?

Devotee—Some of them ran away shouting while others started to lament and go on crying standing close by. Once Mathur Babu attempted a severe test for Thakur by instigating a prostitute. There was a whore by the name of 'Laxmibai'. She could unbalance the mind even of a saint. She was so charming as were her dresses exactly like a celestial nymph. One day, Mathur Babu conspired with her directing "you should bring another fifteen beautiful and properly dressed girls as yourself and keep them in your bed room, when I would visit the place in company with the young priest. No body can allure him yet; if you become successful, I shall arrange for a special reward for you". She replied that it was not so difficult. "I

have fascinated so many giants of the society, it is a simple job for me".

Thereafter, on the appointed day, the professional prostitute having dressed herself with all her best available attires and accompanying those fifteen girls and collecting all the available allurements awaited in the manner by which a tigress waits for her prey. In the afternoon, Mathur Babu arranged to draw two big horses in his 'pheaton' and addressed Thakur 'Baba'! let us have a joy ride in the maidan'.' Thakur readily agreed to the proposal. After having a ride in the maidan, he reached the appointed place just after dusk. Having collected all information from outside that every arrangement was all right, Mathur Babu left the place by arranging the entry of Thakur in that room.

Pathak-What did Thakur do thereafter?

Devotee—No sooner than he entered the room he began to utter with a musical tone Mother! Oh Mother! and went into a superconscious state of trance. The only attire, his loin cloth dropped from his waist and Thakur became completely naked Pathak—What did the prostitutes do?

Devotee—The prostitutes lost their common sense. Some began to fan him, some stood motionless having lost their common sense as to what to do, some poured trickles of water into his mouth, some others began to shout repeatedly for Mathur Babu. Mathur Babu realised from their cries that some grave situation has developed. Arriving there, he found Thakur was in a superconscious state. The prostitutes began to blame Mathur Babu protesting "what a pity it is! Should any one behave in this manner with a man of such childlike simplicity?" Mathur Babu having pacified them stood there motionless. As soon as Thakur regained his consciousness, Mathur Babu carried him in his state of emotional ecstacy to the stage coach and decamped from that place. Since that incident Mathur Babu could not show his face to Thakur in shame. What a critical situation was this?

Pathak—What a wonder! If a person face a beautiful belle, his family tradition, as well as feeling of guilt is exposed sur-

passing human conduct. Here, there were sixteen such belles! On hearing this incident, I am inclined to believe that excepting the Blessed Lord no body can act in this manner. We people are attached to theatrical party and adept in recognising a person of that nature.

Pathak—Has he ever been tested with money?

Devotee—Once Mathur Babu expressed his desire to make a gift of rupees fifty thousand to Thakur. On his blunt refusal to accept such a gift, Mathur Babu suggested "Master, if you are not willing to accept it yourself, let me donate this amount to 'Hridu' by purchasing Government paper in his favour". Thakur replied with great disgust "I can not agree to that proposal also. Even if the money is kept on account of 'Hridu', I may feel that the said sum belongs to me, but kept on Hridu's account only on my behalf".

Brother! behold the ideal of renunciation of Thakur. This is non-attachment through the mind, speech and body. In this case, the tongue is refusing to accept, while the body also is behaving in the same fashion and the mind is acting in the same tune. I have seen with my own eyes how the body of Thakur was averse to coins. As soon as a metallic coin of a paisa or rupee came in contact with his body, his hands became twisted and maimed and they remained in that benumbed state like material something for a long time. Has anybody ever heard of any such instance of wonderful renunciation!

On another occasion, a Marwari gentleman, "Laxmi" by name began to press repeatedly for donating some money to him. Being unable to induce Thakur to agree to his proposal by any means, he personally appeared one day with the bag full of money. At the sight of the money bag, Thakur cried like a child and at last become unconscious! On seeing this scene, the 'Laxmi' Marwari thought of some thing unusual and immediately decamped with the bag of money. In many other instances Mathur Babu found Thakur as detached to women, so also to wealth. Observing total aversion of Thakur to gold, Mathur Babu himself became very charitable. I shall narrate those incidents later.

Pathak—As all doubts are dispelled when one sees God face to face, why then Mathur Babu being so closely associated with Thakur had so much doubt?

Devotee-Mathur Babu was a staunch devotee of the Mother Kali; he was by nature an out and out devotee, a devotee of the supreme Mother in several births. This time, he was associated with Thakur because he would play his role in the Divine Sport of Sri Ramakrishna. He had no doubts in his mind about Thakur. In order, however, to teach the common people Thakur was toying with him by implanting suspicion in the mind of Mathur Babu. He was exposing how far human weakness can extend. He was revealing how was the mind stuff of the worldly people made of? Undergoing several tests himself, he was displaying how the Blessed Lord acts? Just watch -taking the human form how he indulges in Divine Sport? Brother! this mind stuff which is inside human being is some thing very complex. Again, if this mind becomes simple and unsophisticated, there does not exist other more sublime thing on earth.

Pathak—What is this mind stuff? We so often repeat the word mind but what is this stuff? Neither can we perceive nor hear it.

Devotee—You are raising very difficult question at times. I am an uneducated person. What can I explain to you about mind stuff. But I may tell you accordingly as Thakur really shows me.

Please listen. Amongst the foreign magician Mr. Wilson was the greatest sorcerer. He knew all the tricks of magic but jugglery can not be performed single handed. So, he had to teach such tricks to somebody else. Those who learnt from him, a few of them became so expert that they were regarded as perfectly dexterous as Mr. Wilson was. In this case, similarly, there is such great power within Sri Ramakrishna, the nature of that power is to reveal those alluring feats to the world at large. Mind is that chief disciple, with the assistance of which, these magical feats are performed. This mind is the master player of that power. If you can watch the mind's play

and follow its significance, you will be able to foresee and realise the sport of this world in various forms.

Pathak—Please explain in details. It appears to me as a jugglery.

Devotee-This mind is a very funny substance. One of its action is to indulge in sportive play. It always desires to indulge in sport. Within each human being and each living being it takes pleasure in sportive activities in various forms. These activities are of different varieties. One can not understand easily even after watching these games. All these are the games played by that single mind. That mind, though in reality is single but it adopts various forms for different sports. Its game does not terminate in one birth but continues from one birth to another. It indulges in various games in a particular human form. After dissolution of that body, it finds a new abode in a fresh body along with all its ingredients of playful activities. It again indulges in its play in that body. Mind has a resting bed for slumber. Until it gets absorbed in a deep sleep and remains dormant in that state, there is no respite from its sportive activities. Once it rests in its bed, it does not arise and awake again. Mind has no specific form or a particular character. In whatever body it indulges in its sport, the nature and form of the mind is determind by those of the body. Knowing and observing these things one has to understand the real substance. Mind rests within the body and indulges in sportive activities in its own fashion, but if one wants to watch it carefully and gets hold of it to control, it will, at once conceal itself. You will not be able to catch hold of it or find it out by searching in heaven or earth. That it conceals itself in this manner is also its sportive play.

Mind is all pervasive within the body. Do you know how it acts? It resembles exactly like the oil coming out of the sesamum seeds. You can not specify that mind is not pervading that particular space. If the mind leaves the body or if it is driven out of a part of the body, in that case, does the body or the part of the body becomes inert?

Have you witnessed the sportive play of the horses in the

magic show of Mr. Wilson? Likewise, there is an item of horse show of the mind. The horses are completely within the control of the mind. Whatever it commands they obey its instructions. This mind is like the soul of the horses. When they stay in the stable, they remain inert as if dead. No sooner than the mind rides on them and holds their reins, they appear to neigh loudly and gallop faster than the speed of lightening. Mind has five horses. Do you know their names? They are the eyes, ears, nose, tongue and skin. Unless the mind rides on any one of them, they can not function. The eyes cannot see, the ears cannot hear, the nose cannot smell, the skin cannot have the experience of touch. This is the horse show and a direct game of the mind. There are many other very complex games of the mind. Please listen—let me narrate a few of them.

As there are many precious stones within the sea, similarly there rest many objects within the sea of mind. The names of these objects are called knowledge about worldly Whatever is learnt after observing and perceiving, riding on the mind-horse is the worldly knowledge. Keeping the worldly knowledge within its inner fold, the mind wears a outward appearance like the sea. Whenever something is needed by it occasionally, it takes the role of the diver and dives within its inner self to bring out the desired object upto the surface. When it acts like a diver, they call it as remembrance. Again, when the same mind divides itself into two to discriminate between the good and the evil, between the holy and the unholy, and after much discrimination decides the issue ultimately, people call it intelligence. Besides, when the mind assumes the role of a painter and paints the picture of the material world within itself, then they call it a special form of the mental faculty (Chitta); again when it enjoys selfsatisfaction by propagtaing repeatedly self-aggradizement, they call it egoism.

Mind has various costumes and appearances. You are attached to a dramatical society and fully aware that an actor usually presents different personalities and characters to the spectators by putting up various costumes and make up. Simi-

larly, mind puts on various types and faculties and displays different sportive play. After wearing the role of passion, anger, greed, and infatuation etc. whatever characteristics are displayed by it, they are all cruel and destructive in nature. On the other hand, leaving aside these characters and roles, when it concentrates itself on devotion and prayer to Supreme Being, it assumes a divine and sublime appearance. Devilish type of mind is the worst enemy of human beings while its divine form is the best friend. Devilish shape of the mind is its dreary form; it limits the individual soul in that form but the divine form is its sublime manifestation; this form liberates the individual self from bondage. Do you know how the nature of the mind rests in its unclean state? Thakur used to mention that it is like the tail of a dog. When it is pulled, it straightens itself but it is twisted into a coil as soon as released. Mind has two states—one is unclean or dirty and the other is pure. In an unclean state, you can not rely on your mind. the sublime state, if you concentrate it on the lotus feet of the Almighty Lord, it remains here in tact; otherwise, if it is let loose, towards worldly things, it again recoils to an impure and unclean state. Thakur used to say that if an elephants's body is fully washed and then kept in chain at its resting place, it will keep clean; otherwise, if it is let loose, it will besmear its body with mud and dust and become shabby resembling the normal uncouth appearance. In the pure state, mind is not called then mind but pure consciousness. Once consciousness is awakened, the whole world becomes illumined with effulgence. He experiences direct awareness of consciousness and thereafter he can not stoop low and indulge in foul play.

Mind has a peculiar nature; wherever you fix, it will assume the form of the object. If kept with gross matter, it will become inert and dead. If kept with awareness and consciousness, it will remain as consciousness. As a piece of coal, when left uncared for in the muddy soil, it would look like the soil; again if you put it along with the fire, it will exist like a flame of fire.

When a string is jingled, it produces different kinds of notes, likewise mind behaves automatically in various manners

when it is knocked. The body of the living being is similar to a harp of the mind. There are four kinds of body. These are gross, subtle, causal and supercausal. When the mind indulges in sportive play in the gross body, it runs after lust and gold. At that time, it does not remain conscious of any other thing on earth than money and sensual pleasures. In that state, it knows only the functions of eating, sleeping and gratification of sense organs.

When it indulges in its play in a subtle body, the temperature of that body of the living being rises. He can at that time, watch the conflict of the mind and then struggle with it. While struggling, sometimes he wins, at times he loses. Having disclosed the inner soul, it amuses itself by contesting with the individual self. In the causal state of the body, it remains peaceful and quiet and enables the individual being to enjoy the profound bliss of immediate awareness of God. In supercausal state it remains dormant and causes the individual being to remain in the state of deep sleep. In that state of sleep, all forms, qualities and colour disappear and the individual self reposes in a state of perfect peace.

Let me explain this to you in greater detail. Pleaselisten! As there are sixteen reeds in a 'Sitar' (stringed instrument) where different notes are produced in each reed, Similarly, in the instrument of body (like Sitar) there are seven reeds. The mind produces different vibrations in each reed and goes on playing music. Paramhansha Deva used to say that a bridge is formed within the first three reeds. When the mind is tuned to these three reeds, the individual self becomes absolutely agitated. His only aim is directed to eat, sleep and gratify sensual apetite. The individual being becomes completely devoid of senses, considering the sensual pleasures, wealth as the ribs of their chest. When the mind rises on to the fourth reed, the slumber of the individual being gets disturbed. As if, heis just sleeping and again startling after awakening. Uptil now, he has come to know that apart from money and sensual pleasures, there is more fun in other phases of life. This is theabode of consciousness. From this state the individual being can get an idea of the Kingdom of heaven. That idea remains.

faint in the initial stage and is transitory in nature like the quick flashes of lightening. In this stage, there is no opportunity of becoming indifferent and drowsy. After sometime having elapsed in this state, the temperature of his body still rises. Previously, what was a faint idea of the Kingdom of heaven, becomes clear like a day light but the subtleness and stability do not vary widely. For this reason, he cannot remain totally concentrated on the discussions about the Almighty. Like the murmuring fly of a sweetmeat shop, it sometimes sits on the dish of the Sandesh (sweetmeat) of the owner, at other times it rests on the vat of the sweeper's night-soil. When the mind of the individual self rises on the fifth plane, the earlier nature of the embodied soul is almost transformed. Now, he cannot be recognised as the same individual being of earlier character. In this stage, he does not desire to go to bed with money and sense pleasures. As a drunkard is obstinate in having his drinks, similarly such a person becomes tenacious in listening to the signing of praises to the Blessed Lord. Now, his mind is his own property and within his control. By this time, he has detected the worst nature of false knowledge, understood the range of the run of play of the mind, learnt how to struggle with the mind's inconsistencies, concentrate it to a particular direction, according to his wishes. He has thus been able to discover the frowning of his mind and get the clue of its puppet show. When it rises to the sixth plane, the embodied soul can see God face to face but is unable to touch Him. Thakur used to say that as the growing flame of a lantern can be seen from outside the glass but when one goes to touch it, he is prevented in doing so by the glass chimney; similarly the human being can see God from this state but cannot contact Him; he is debarred from this function by a subtle screen. This stage is a very rare stage of an individual being. Thakur used to call it as a very interesting affair to indulge in a game of the boat race with a stake between the fifth and sixth plane.

Do you know what is called the game of 'Baich' (rowing)? Collecting some small boats on the Ganges, people compete in racing on water like horse racing—have you witnessed it? Once they come to this shore and again go over to the other

bank. This is called the game of rowing. In the present instance, it is the mind's game of rowing. You reach the sixth plane for a time, while you come back to the fifth plane at other times. In other words, it perceives the vision of the A'mighty Lord once and in the next moment, it comes down. to the fifth stage and sings forth loudly and praises for the direct vision of the Blessed Lord to every body. Further down, it is the fourth stage, where there is no real joy at all ! Because. the individual soul's nescience obscures the mind with its power of veiling the real nature of Brahman. Again, if the mind. reaches a further upward stage i.e., the Seventh plane, the individual soul loses all its power of enjoyment or taste. Here. mind loses its faculty and the embodied soul reaches a superconscious state. This is called the dissolution of the mind. Do you know what this dissolution is? It is like a drop of the water of the Ganges when mixed with the main stream. it loses all its form and nature. Mind like a doll of salt gets dissolved completely in the water of the Ganges; after this theminds play comes to an end.

Pathak—You seem to be an illiterate person who has not gonethrough any scripture; even, they say so. How then could you come to know so much on the subject?

Devotee—I have told you earlier that to have an opportunity of seeing Sri Ramakrishna face to face, is equivalent to the act of seeing everything; it amounts to have a vision of all the Incarnations of Divinity (Avataras). If you can understand' him, the underlying principles/truth of all the scriptures can be clearly understood. The effect of spiritual practice (Sadhana) and constant prayer can be felt easily by the individual being. Such is the excellence of seeing him that even now, ignorant worldly person bonded by the limitations of body and mind begets awareness of the existence of the Lord; a sleeping soul is awakened, a dull-headed fellow gets converted into a scholar, a blind man develops the power of sight, a deaf person can get back the power of hearing, a lame man can cross the sea. and a dumb fellow develops the gift of the gab. His sublimesayings are like the sacred formulas. These words have wonderful penetrating power. However absolutely dark that placemight be, it becomes instantly illumined wherein those sayings are showered. Thakur used to say that when a match stick is once lighted in an eternally dark room, it becomes illuminated instantly; similarly, when the sayings and the grace of the Lord are showered on people, their life-long dark cottage is lighted up at once. The later again that could be a light of the country of the life again.

As a small bullet, when fired through the mouth of a canon, can demolish a hillock with the help of the gun powder and conflagration, likewise, such power exists in the words of Thakur that it can completely destroy the veil of the deep-seated ignorance or Maya which envelopes completely the real nature of the Almighty and the essence of the divine truth. The words of Thakur are as powerful as the cannon balls.

Let me narrate one more instance of the greatness of the teachings of Thakur. Please listen. Whenever people talk about a thing, those talks are passing words; they come up with the air, soaring with the wind and then mix with the breeze but the teachings of Thakur are not like them. As soon as the words are uttered, they penetrate into the heart through the ears. No sooner than they reach the heart, an image of the subject spoken is formed therein. Do you know how is that happening? It is exactly similar to a click of the camera's shutter when the snapshot is complete. One, in whose mind the picture is formed, came to realise the implications of the subject on hearing the words of Thakur and on having a perception of the outline of that picture. Not only did he form an idea of the subject but also store that in his memory for all time to come. But, what people say, they are transitory words. They enter by one ear and get out by the other. They do not leave any impression anywhere. It is like the water mark left by a ship when it plies through the water which dissolves immediately after the ship passes away. Such a large ship divided the water into two parts but no trace was left behind. In the same way, words of worldly people are grand and appealing at the time of speaking but cannot leave any lasting impression. They cannot move and enter the heart of the people. If, at all, they penetrate, they do not find

any lasting place there. The kids play with the broken pieces of earthen wares on the water surface. These earthen pieces jump and swim over the surface and cross the water but do not sink or enter the body of the water. Let me give you another example of the glory of Thakur. I have mentioned to you about the image of those words which reflects within the inner mind; that image becomes full of life. After becoming lively, it goes on singing with a melodious voice the glory of Sri Ramakrishna. This music is extremely sweet. On listening to this, even conflagration (of heart) will be extinguished. Do you know, when it plays? It starts singing when you become overwhelmed with grief, when the individual soul's nescience or ignorance tries to cause the heart to glow with fire; it starts at that critical time only. Do you like to know how? When a dacoit or bandit attacks you, it comes out automatically and uncalled for, being armed with the appropriate weapons like your most intimate friend without your asking for and shouts and threatens with a roaring voice that the rogues, out of panic, do not find out means for getting out of the trouble. In the common place of individual soul's nescience, there is no dearth of thieves or rogues. That is the kingdom of thieves and tyrants. They are peeping every where. Is there any sort of respite without such a solid support? Do you know who are those thieves and rogues? They are lust, anger, greed, delusion, or infatuation, arrogance or pride, malice and their offsprings. Having the opportunity of seeing Sri Ramakrishna face to face, and where his grace is showered, there the hidden Lord is revealed to him. The distant God comes closer to him. That Blessed Lord manifests himself in this ideal deity. That Almighty Being becomes this personified God and the tutelary deity appears like our own kith and kin. Now, realise what is Sri Ramakrishna? You have personally seen Sri Ramakrishna and taken refuge in him; you too will gradually come to recognise him.

Pathak—You were so long talking about mind. Mind is so powerful; I find that mind is all powerful. Has Sri Ramakrishna no supremacy over mind?

Devotee-Mind is not all powerful. Sri Ramakrishna is

all in all. As the mind reigns supreme after putting the buckles in the mouth of the organ of perception, similarly, Sri Ramakrishna goes on riding at his sweet will by fixing the reins in the mouth of the mind. Whatever is dictated by him, the mind acts accordingly. So much jumping, forlicking and frisking, so much wandering in an agitated manner, such jugglery of the mind, all these functions are performed purely at the sweet will and power of Sri Ramakrishna. Do you know how are these acted upon? When water, rice and pulses are placed inside an earthen pot and heated, the rice and pulses begin to leap about. They jump about not by their own strength but through the energy of fire. Likewise, mind and intellect frisk about so much inside human frame (as if the earthen pot) that is not due to their own initiative but through the power of Sri Ramakrishna. This illustration was also given by Thakur.

Pathak—When Sri Ramakrishna explained in detail by citing this example, whether did he mention at that time, if the mind and intelligence play about in human body through his power or the influence of the Mother Kali? He also did not recognise anything else than Mother Kali.

Devotee—He said they wander about through the strength gathered from the Mother Kali.

As Jesus Christ himself being the Father, used to appeal and refer to the strength of the Father in Heaven, His will and His greatness in all matters; similarly, Sri Ramakrishna himself being the embodiment of that Mother as also of Lord Rama. and Lord Krishna used to say of Mother's power, Mother's will and the glory of that Mother. At other times, he used to refer to the power of Lord Krishna and his will; sometimes, also he said all are due to the power of Lord Rama and his will. Though he invoked the names of other mainfestations but he revealed to me that he himself was all of them summed together. I do not know who is Kali, nor do I know Rama or Krishna. I know only Sri Ramakrishna. At the same time, having been able to recognise Sri Ramakrishna I have come to realise Mother Kali, Rama and Krishna.

I have no other perception except Sri Ramakrishna. Once:

I looked upon him as my ideal deity, now I am realising him as the cosmic existence of the universe. In this phenomenal world, I can perceive him only. You know very well that I am an illiterate person, neither have I gone through the Ramayana or the Mahabharata nor have I gone through the austere spiritual practices (Sadhana) or participated in anv real work. My only support is Sri Ramakrishna. By whatever name you may call the Blessed Lord, I find therein only Sri Ramakrishna. Hence, what else shall I call it except it is Sri Ramakrishna and his power?

IV

Pathak—Until the frown of the faculty of the mind is driven out, till then no progress can be achieved; how can one understand the character of his mind or influence and control it? I am extremely eager to understand the trails of my mind.

Devotee—Behold the greatness of Sri Ramakrishna! Watch the majesty of having the opportunity of seeing personally Sri Ramakrishna. Look at the glory of hearing the Divine Sport and praises of Sri Ramakrishna. He is the greatness personified and an embodiment of spendour of quality.

There are hundreds of learned persons well versed in the scriptures amongst thousands of men; there are so many scholars having the highest degrees, so many hundreds of persons versatile in state language, so many moralists, scientists and other highly respectable people of high standing, so many immensely wealthy persons like Lord Kuvera, hundreds of respectable religious leaders of different sects but you being connected with the theatre have expressed so much eagerness to understand and follow the lofty ideals of divine truth, yet I may say-how many people are there amongst lacs of men who have developed such keen inquisitiveness for grace? You are immensely fortunate. You are really praiseworthy. As also is adorable the glory of Sri Ramakrishna! Through the grace of Lord Ramakrishna, such a deep longing for the underlying truth has developed in you suddenly which strength alone will explain to you the traits of the mindstuff and make you realise it. Sri Ramakrishna is profoundly kind. If one can take refuge in him, his frowns of the

mental agony is driven out. You better stick to hold him firmly.

Pathak—How is that one should go on holding him firmly for long?

Devotee—Just remember his figure, pray for devotion and firm faith in you to be developed, sing praises of his qualities and Divine Sport and pay close attention to such devotional songs.

Pathak—Is this enough for one to practise. Nothing more to do? I have heard that something tangible is achieved only after constant prayer and spiritual practices (Sadhana).

Devotee-Brother! you have not yet followed at all, the implications of seeing Sri Ramakrishna face to face. You not yet been able to understand what sort of highest form of religious and spiritual practice it is, on merely hearing the discussions about the Divine Sport of Sri Ramakrishna. I do not know of any other spiritual practice (Sadhana) higher than your decorating the holy figure of Sri Ramakrishna with flowers and thickly set of garlands and wreaths. I know that nothing can be achieved without spiritual practices and constant prayer. Sri Ramakrishna too would not leave one without his doing such prayers and spiritual practice. But, that constant spiritual practice which Sri Ramakrishna urges us to perform is a very interesting one. One does not have to exert much in that practice, as there is plenty of joy and exhilaration. Do you know what kind of practice is it? It is like a man extremely eager to proceed to holy Vrindaban and to see personally Sri Radha-Krishna but he has neither money to cover the journey, nor is he able to go there on foot, but possesses only the strong will to go. While wandering along, he accidentally meets a wealthy person. On coming to know the desire of the former person, the latter asked the former one to accompany him. Taking that fellow along with him to Howrah Station he arranged to purchase a railway ticket for Vrindaban and collected for him (in an earthen pot) whatever eatables he would take on his way, besides a bed roll. Finally, he addressed-"you may now go to Virdaban". Sri Ramakrishna used to provide the resources in this way and arrange to send people

to face his ideal deity. Through the grace of Sri Ramakrishna such an impossible opportunity used to be created.

Thakur used to say that when the natural wind is blowing, there is no necessity for breeze from the fan made of palm leaves. Now, it is the natural wind that is blowing, so the breeze of constant spiritual practice is not required. Have you followed what is the natural breeze? That is the grace of Sri Ramakrishna. He has expressed "I am still in my mortal frame; now, there is no need of any austere and hard work for you. One will be able to gain easily the ripe fruit." One day, when Harish (one of the attendant) was meditating underneath the assemblage of the five sacred trees. Thakur somehow came to know of this from the holy temple. Immediately, he rushed there. After placing his palm on his chest and awaking him from the meditating state, he sportively addressed him "Hallo! what is the subject of your meditation? Come along with me. I will arrange for a feast of ripe mangoes for you."

Now tell me, in which age which spiritual guide has given so much encouragement, so much hope for an individual being? I am finding that it is only Thakur. What praise shall I sing of the glory of that spiritual guide who arranges for an individual soul, to have a direct vision of his ideal deity with so much ease? Lips will become mute to describe his ways and activities.

Pratap Hazra used to stay near Thakur in that temple compound of Mother Kali. Hazra was a devotee of severe meditation. He was very fond of penance and constant repetition of the sacred hymn. Silent counting of the beads of the rosary was his heart's longing. Constant chanting silently of the sacred verse was practised by him. So many times Thakur snatched away the rosary from his hands and put obstacles in his practice of the repetition over the beads of the rosary on so many occasions. He used to advise the latter "when you have come over here, everything will be fulfilled automatically through the will of the Mother. Success will come about by three snaps of the fingers. Why are you labouring so hard?" Hazra did not have faith in his assurance. He used to ask for the rosary from Thakur and again took his seat for counting

the beads silently. Hazra came to Thakur since a very long time. When Thakur used to stay occasionally for two to three months at a stretch in the house of 'Hridaya' in the village of Sehore, Hazra has managed his company since that time. Hazra is an object of great fun in the realm of the Divine Sport of Sri Ramakrishna. By indulging in sportive play with Hazra, Thakur set a number of glaring examples of learning the truth before the sceptical mind and played fun with his own devotees. He (Hazra) could not believe that a person can reap his full ripe harvest in his own home, through the grace of Thakur without taking the trouble of tilling the soil. By listening to the story of the sportive play of Thakur with Hazra, one can discover the profound greatness of Thakur very easily. Perceiving this phenomenon, even the staunchest sceptical character would tend to have a firm faith at the lotus feet of Sri Ramakrishna. He directly observes the profundity, greater solemnity and strength for immediate fulfillment of results in the teachings of his spiritual guide than in the sayings of the Vedas. A special feature is that there is not the slightest doubt in the fact that taking refuge in Thakur leads one to realisation of God-consciousness with the utmost ease.

Those who were eager to work hard and desirous of constant spiritual practices in order to satisfy their desires, Thakur used to direct some of them to go over to the temple of the Mother Kali and pray and count the beads of the rosary for three consecutive days. To others who could not continue for three days, he used to advise them to pray ceaselessly for one day; to some others, if they could not meditate and repeat the sacred verse in any way, he advised that they might keep on concentrating and remembering him (Thakur). To some, he used to tell "you need not labour for any thing else but pay frequent visits to my place. It is to-day that you have come here, better come on two more occasions in future". To some other persons he advised "it will be all right if you will come to me either on a Tuesday or Saturday". Sometimes, in a state of intense emotional trance, he said that coming here any one who will crave with real simplicity saying 'Oh Lord! how shall I be able to recognise you or your real identity', will surely

discover the real meaning of the Supreme truth. Uttering from his holy lips once is enough but he pronounced them three times because the people of this place are totally devoid of any faith, completely void of devotion, half-dead in stark ignorance and false knowledge and afflicted with the poison of worldly affairs. Let they may repose their trust in him, he said thrice. Thakur used to sav that in this iron age, people, if at all, may accept one six-teenth truth of what is advised sixteen times. That is the reason why Thakur displayed to the material world with his hard labour and set examples for the full sixteen cycles. Can you now imagine, is there any limit to the compassion and grace of that Thakur of whom people told on these lines? Even with so much advantage, people did not follow him or pay heed to his teachings. That is why they are called the individual self or the human beings. Oh! Lord Ramakrishna! whatever thou may bestow on us, wherever you may like to place us, but alas Thakur! for the sake of your benign self, kindly do not impart within us the wordly knowledge of ordinary human souls of this mundane world, nor compel us to keep the company of such earthly minded people. Thus, the worldly minded people hanker after such limited wealth, fame, respect and position in life but none yearns for the Blessed Lord saving "Oh Lord! where is your abode, or how can I get to realise you?" This is the type of intelligence of ordinary human beings. They adore a piece of glass leaving aside gold. They put on their neck a poisonous snake in preference to a diamond studed necklace. Brother, our mental state gets a shock with the gossip of these individual selves. Brother! cry loudly from the core of your heart repeatedly "Hail Ramakrishna Deva".

Listen to the sayings of Sri Ramakrishna which bring solace to your soul. Please pay attention to what is said about the treasure of Thakur. How very kind is he; what amount of hope and encouragement is rendered by Thakur? Listen to his greatness and magnanimity. One day, in a state of emotional trance he said "Hallo! one who will come here and bow down his head in reverence, is sure to have the guarantee of freedom from fear. Any body taking refuge in me, will

not have to work hard any more for emancipation. After going through austere penance for a long time and ceaseless religious practices and meditation, I have carved out a mould within myself. As soon as I cast somebody into that mould, he will come out with that frame. This may be compared to the moulding machine of the mint. When the slab of silver is pushed from this end, immediately the dazzling rupee coins with the stamp of the queen's face come out from the other end. The mould of Thakur is like that machine. Now, you may well understand what Thakur is? How is Thakur and to which place does he belong? Now behold-what Thakur you had the opportunity to see yourself and whose consecrated food offered have you shared? What is left for you in your spiritual practices? How many times have you solemnly dedicated your head as oblation by severing it to the feet of the Mother in your previous births, for a direct vision of the Blessed Lord, as a result of which you have been able to see this Thakur face to face. You have roamed about aimlessly for a long time being misguided by ignorance. Having the opportunity of a direct sight of his sublime appearance, you have been able to get over the mental confusion, a trace of the dizziness only remains. Better, start a movement and discourse on the Divine Sport of Thakur. Decorate, to your heart's satisfaction, the portrait of Thakur with flowers. Consecrate the choicest food to him and start dancing with joy by clapping on your both sides. At the same time, shout "Hail Sri Ramakrishna, victory to you!" Now, you liberated souls.

Pathak—How have we been emancipated from the shackles of this world? We exist exactly in the same way as before; all those sickness, miseries and exacting labour of the domestic world remain as they were there, and we are only going round and round.

Devotee—The dizziness of the bygone days still persists, that is why, it looks like this. Do you know how is that? It is, as if you have ridden a very strong horse and it is gallopping fast. At that moment, you decide that you will bring it to a halt at a fixed spot. Accordingly, you are controlling the

reins ahead from a distance. Though the horse is gradually going to stop but where you decided earlier to bring it to a halt, it has advanced by a further few cubits from that spot, inspite of your trying to stop it at that place. You have met with the same fate. You are within the range of a few cubits but have come to a halt. If you advance a little, you will realise that you are liberated from the earthly shackles.

You further mentioned that the hard labour for your family life is still continuing. Please listen to what Thakur has said in reply to this. He used to say, that if a clerk is released from the prison, will he continue to do the clerical work or go on dancing in a jubilant mood? A worldly person when liberated through the grace of the Blessed Lord, re mains within the domestic world. Is this domestic world separate from the domain of the Blessed Lord? This mundane world also belongs to him. If you talk about the miseries and sickness-one who stays near the kitchen oven will severely feel the warmth of the oven in his body. This domestic world is like the burning oven and your habitation is in that place. How can you avoid feeling the heat? How can there be no stain on your body-? Inspite of all these obstacles, the individual soul is liberated through the grace of God. You may be able to realise this from your own present state.

Pathak—I am still wandering about, inspite of being emanicipated. I could not follow the analogy of the horse you mentioned about, wherein lies the difference in kind?

Devotee—Of what kind it is, listen in a different way. One potter of the earthen pots, spins his wheel fast with the help of a stick. It is going round and round, so long the stick is pushing it. Now, the stick is being withdrawn but the wheel still goes on moving. Till such time the stick was stuck to your wheel but as soon as you have a chance to see him face to face, the stick has been removed. But you are still wandering about because of the previous momentum of the revolutions of the wheel. There is considerable benefit in those revolutions. This time Thakur will mould a different type of utensils. You will be able to find them later.

Pathak—When will the revolution stop? Further, how shall I perceive whether some progress is being made?

Devotee—The more Sri Ramakrishna will attract your mind within his own boundary, your wandering will be reduced to that extent. When the total mind will be attracted fully, you will find a great funny feeling. All these earthly troubles—ailments, miseries and fear will vanish even though they are existing. This is the state of peace and tranquility.

I will not be able to convince you the state of non-existance even if they actually remain. You will automatically realise this only when you reach that state. Your inner mind will show you the real truth and make you convinced. Now, your mind is questioning, how can I feel myself emancipated from worldly fetters when I am still in bondage? In that state, it will dictate, where are my shackles? I am eternally free. Hence, Thakur used to say human beings are in bondage as well as liberated by the modifications of his mental state. Amidst thousand and one types of work, the liberated soul does not come under any bondage.

V

Pathak—That mind which binds you with earthly fetters again sets you free from the shackles. Therefore, I find that it is the mind which reigns supreme. But, you said that Sri Ramakrishna is the monarch of the mind.

Devotee—Through the grace of the Lord, you are gradually becoming able to witness and follow his Divine Sport. Now, please listen—is there any difference between the mind and Thakur? I have told you earlier about the sportive play of the individual Divine image and the all pervading Universal appearance. I have further explained, to the best of my ability, about the inter-play of the inner and outer world. This is the game of the inner world. Brother, bear this one thing in mind: in this creation, there is the game of only unity. That single entity is Ramakrishna Deva. There is no other second entity except Ramakrishna Deva. That one entity has manifested itself in innumerable varieties in that Divine Sport. Where that real single entity (non-dual) exists, words can not describe such phenomenon. Where there is Divine Sportive

play, i.e. existence in infinite variety, only there, words can express their actions. In the context of Divine Sport, whatever I may mention about individual self. Supreme Spirit, the Blessed Lord, the eternal energy, the cosmic nescience (Maya), the mind. intellect etc. you may take them to be nothing but Ramakrishna Deva. In the phenomenon of Divine Sport that single undivided entity has manifested itself in an innumerable variety of ways, different conditions, variegated forms, various figures and appearances, different qualities, different names and various modifications etc. Hence, that same one entity has to be called by different names in the phenomenon of Divine Sport. In this universe, the diversity belongs to the same single one object, do you know why? Broadly as an example, it is like a workshop of timber. In that factory, the chief ingredient is only that same timber. Many objects have been manufactured out of that same timber, for examplebeam, plank, door, almirah, cot, sofa, box, casket, ship, toys etc. Where the only material is wood, there is no variety therein. So, there is no other expression except wood. Amongst everything the only word is wood or timber. Where there is a workshop, there lies variety and different words have been attributed due to that diversity of names. Within the workshop, though the wooden furniture appear different owing to various sizes, shapes, colours, conditions and services but the same common material wood pervades every one of them or they all are made of the same one ingredient wood. As various names have been given to the same wood, owing to conversion into separate objects within the workshop, likewise, this one Sri Ramakrishna has been identified by different names due to his transformation into various gross and subtle forms in a variety of ways in the workshop of his Divine Sport. In this creation, the same Ramakrishna Deva pervades every where and/or everything is made of one and the same Ramakrishna material. In this connection, please listen to a song:

Oh! my Mind, recite the name of Ramakrishna repeatedly. Ramakrishna, the moon of my world, has illumined the entire universe. One who is Rama is also Krishna and now he is this Ramakrishna.

I have tested and perceived that there are distinct indications of such manifestation in his holy frame, who is the ideal deity of the world and spiritual guide of the universe. On realisation, you will find his presence both in this frame and in a formless state. He does exist in every being as their inner conscience in the spirit as well as in matter, in subtle state as well as in causal state. What business have thou to argue and discriminate who is Ramakrishna, where does he belong? Your receptacle is so minute, how can the vast ocean be accommodated therein? If earnestly thou desire to cross the sea of this earthly life, loose no time to pay your adorable obeisance to his assuring lotus feet.

The one and the same Supreme Spirit has become many in the all pervading external universe. This variety is not confined to one type even in appearance, colour, quality or nature. He has become infinite in such a way that it is hardly possible for anybody to understand that it is the same substnce and the sportive play of the one eternal entity. It is the one entity that we call by different names. It is he who is the Supreme Being, the individual soul as well as the mind etc. Sometimes, it is he who is the horse, at other times the rider. Do you know that in your theatre, people make up as ghosts in the play of 'Daksha-Yagga? Those who play such roles are all human beings but pose as ghosts by staining their feet, body and arms with black ink. Similarly, the individual soul, by smearing their body with dirt, indulge in mind's play becoming the mind of the individuals. Again, the same entity being possessed of some attributes, poses as the individual soul. All these sportive plays are the secret games of Ramakrishna. Unless he reveals to us, no body will be able to perceive it. You have now heard that all these are games of the one single entity but each one can be viewed in their individual separate appearance. As an individual embodied soul, he exists in one variety; again as his mind,

he exists within him in an altogether separate appearance. Again, he is observing both of them separately, though being materially the same substance. What a wonderful phenomenon it is!

Pathak—How is the mind inter-linked with the embodied soul? Besides, who is that, which perceives the mind as different from the embodied self?

Devotee—Do you know how the mind is linked up with the individual embodied self? It is just as the milk or ghee is mixed with water. Do you know what is that entity which visualises the mind as different from the embodied self? It is that embodied soul. He observes his existence within himself. So long, he was indulging in sportive play by soiling his mind with filth and carrying it along with him. Now, having stopped that play and cleaned the dirt from his body and purifying the mind, he is watching his own soul through his same mind. This is also a different kind of his sport.

When one observes his own soul, the holy persons call this phenomenon as self-realisation. This realisation is achieved by associating the mind only. At this stage, the sense organs like the strong horses are no longer active. In this connection, listen to an interesting story. That ego which was shouting and roaring so long throughout one's life with the sense of 'I'-ness, completely disappears at this time, so much so, that not a trace of it remains at all. You will not find it any where even if you search throughout the universe.

Pathak—According to your point of view, self-realisation means discovery of the true nature of one's soul. Well, does anybody realise this with his own eyes?

Devotee-No, it is realised through one's inner perception.

Pathak—Does this perception take place through any form or without form?

Devotee—It is a sort of personal experience. It can not be described through the lips. But, I may make an attempt to give a faint idea of that state. Do you know what does become the condition of that person who realises such an experience?

It is, like the condition of a person who keeps mum after having a heavy smoke of the hemp. In this state, the horse-like mind stops its game totally. As if, that kind of sport never existed before. In this stage, there is no weal or woe at all. This domain is of profound peace and tranquility, be that for a while only.

Pathak—At this stage, how does the Blessed Lord look like?

Devotee—Thakur used to tell—once Lord Rama accosted the monkey chief (Hanumana), "how do you perceive me"? Hanumana said in reply "Oh, Rama! sometimes, I observe you as a huge conflagration and I resemble as a spark of that fire At other times, I perceive that you are my master and I am your servant. Again, I feel that there is no distinction between you and me". In the present instance, the Blessed Lord looks like a majestic fire.

Pathak—How does an individual self live in this world when spiritually liberated from all bondages?

Devotee—He wanders about superficially on the domestic world. Water no longer percolates in his innermost self. He does not get perturbed over the miseries and joys of the world; does not lose sight of the pole-star—the Blessed Lord. In whatever direction may his body incline but his concentration of the mind is fixedly pointed towards the lotus feet of God exactly like the hands of the compass. This is the state of absolute peace and tranquility. Without the boundless grace of the Blessed Lord, human beings cannot attain this state. In this state of spiritual liberation while living, the egoism does not vanish completely, only a trace of it remains. But that egoism is sustained in a dormant state.

Pathak—If all the troubles may end when the mind is totally merged in the meditation of Sri Ramakrishna, how in that case can the mind be concentrated on him only in no time? What is the way out? At present, I find that my mind is once concentrating on the honey and at other times, on the filth like an ordinary fly.

Devotee-Previously, it totally avoided the receptacle of honey

and sat on the filth only. Now, it will continue to sit constantly on the honey like a bee, entirely through his grace only who has extended his compassion to taste the honey. You better continue to stick to him now. That will enable you to succeed on every count. Thakur used to sing a song thus:

"Brother! keep on the blissful mood, maintaining this spirit, you will ultimately be successful If the two decoit brothers 'Anka' and 'Banka', and that cruel butcher 'Sujan' aspire emancipation; and a whore who by teaching a parrot to repeat the name of Lord Krishna. in a playful mood attains liberation. as 'Mirabai' attained salvation: then every soul may aspire liberation from bondage. The entire world's wealth is your store-house, Thou exchange wealth like a trader. Everything will become silent instantly with one word. No one will be able to find out why. Cultivate such arduous devotion within your heart, Forsaking false pretention and tricks. Total submission and dedicated service bring forth direct awareness of Lord Rama easily."

Thakur used to cite another fitting illustration. During the rainy season, the fields are completely submerged under water. At that time, they do not become visible any more. As if, the field is like pool of water. How does the field behave then? The field simply stares day and night at the sky and keep quiet. In due time, it finds that the water which inundated it is no longer there; everything has dried up. You too, may continue to rest looking steadfastly on the face of Sri Ramakrishna In due time, you too, shall be able to discover that the lust for sensual pleasures and wealth which have overcome your mind does not exist any longer.

Thakur used to say another very interesting talk—"Oh embodied soul! You possess two hands—you should hold on-to the lotus feet of the Supreme Lord with one and keep the other

on to the domestic world. One whose pull is stronger will attract later in due time.

VI

Pathak—How nice are the sayings of Paramhansha Deva! So long I listen to his sayings, I cannot remember any thing else. As if, my mind gets totally absorbed with his sayings. Within this age of mine, I have heard topics on so many variety of subjects but no talks are so absorbing as these are. The more I listen to, my mind gets attracted in a greater degree to hear further on these topics. But, I am unable to feel whether am I gaining anything materially? Further, I do not know how far I am able to follow whatever talks I am hearing. Now, let me ask you one thing; while describing the state of being emancipated while living, you said earlier that egoism disappears altogether, and if at all, a trace of it remains, that lingers in a state of suspended animation. Please explain what is that.

Devotee—This subject is more abstruse than the talks about the mind. Whatever I have been able to gather through the grace of Thakur, please listen. That human being's hankering for self from the very begining of his childhood is a very dangerous habit. As the children get frightened when repeated shouts are made calling hobgoblin, though there is no such real thing in existence; similarly, there is no such real object as 'I', though people go on shouting continuously for his ego (self). When a child grows older, he comes to know that hobgoblin is a slogan only for scaring people; similarly, when human being becomes wiser, he comes to learn that the word 'I' is a mere word denoting egoism only. It is unreal like a hobgoblin—a non-existing entity.

Paramhansha Deva used to say—"do you know what is 'I'? It is like an onion. When you peal off the skin of the onion, ultimately the onion disappears leaving behind nothing; likewise, if you go on discriminating, starting with your elemental physique, the object 'I' cannot be ultimately found out

That people are immersed in such deep water, without following the straight path, they have entered into a round about puzzling situation. They are floating on a vast sea of water living in a dry land; the real cause of all these are his

mistaken identity of the non-existent 'I' as truly existing. That sense of egoism is a total false knowledge and cause of all bondage. As soon as the true knowledge is awakened, the mis-conception immediately passes away. His confusion about religion and irreligion, virtue and vice clears up instantly. At that time, his sense of purity and impurity appears identical. Then, he can find out that his necklace is hanging on the neck. All his acts of worship, service and other various spiritual practices come to an end. He begins to have a vision of the Lord everywhere in the universe. None else can realise what other things happen to him unless he himself is placed in that situation. Though that ego which proclaims "I am the son of so and so, I am such and such person, do you not know who I am" is not totally false, but do you know, in fact, what that 'I' is? That 'I' is only 'He'. This fact can not be settled by mere intellectual discussion; can not even be comprehended if one hears about it a thousand times. But, when the Blessed Lord makes one realise and helps to observe that clearly, then only people can realise it and become free from egoism. this creation, there are no two things except that single undivided entity. Whatever you are observing in this phenomenal world, it is he who pervades every thing. Owing to the bewitching effect of 'Maya', the individual self shouts in bondage with the cry 'I' repeatedly. Such is the enchanting effect of that 'Maya', that it does not allow the individual being to realise the fact that the subject 'I' is nothing but 'He'. The individual self is totally enchanted in the playfulness of 'Maya'. This 'Maya' (delusion) does not even allow the living being to understand its tricks even upto the end of his life. This 'Maya' is indulging in its sportive play in two ways. One is penetrating awareness (Vidya Maya) and the other is ignorance (Avidya Mava). Those individual beings who are enveloped within the domain of (Avidya Maya) false knowledge, being devoid of any spiritual guide, are senselessly absorbed in the game with lust and gold. They are unable to foresee any of the sportive play of 'Maya'. The same monotony continues throughout day and night for them. While those who are within the reach of (Vidya Maya) creative energy through

the grace of God, 'Maya' is revealing its own tricks, guiding them to their original abode by inducing them to play their sportive part. Such an individual soul is even rare amongst thousands of people. If such a soul is discovered, he is the blessed son of the Divine Mother. But, you must know that though he is the blessed son, yet, he is not free from the game of wailing and smiling. The domain of 'Maya' extends upto the limit where the sportive play indulges in. Beginning from the Lord of Creation (Braham), the Lord of Preservation (Vishnu) and the Lord of Destruction (Maheswara) upto the minutest creature, every one is going round and round in the whirlpool of 'Maya'. Do you know how the shackle of delusion (Maya) extends its bondage? Apparently, it appears like a round cord of rubber. Whatever may be the thickness of the object which is bound by that cord, the extent of its length elongates accordingly. Similarly, however subtle may be the substance, the limit of the rope is shortened to such a miunte accordingly. However, minutest the object may be, it will have to remain within the bondage. Neither do I know what lies beyond the bondage, nor have any idea of that stage. Howsoever, may the blessed son be, there is no respite from the hands of bondage. But, the bondage of the blessed son is covetable and longed for even by God, because there is no sorrow there except joy. Those fortunate beings go on enjoying the sportive play of 'Maya'. In this case, though there are smiles and cries similar to the bondage of 'Avidya' (cosmic delusion) but the merriment and misery are of a different type. Yet, there is another bit of fun in this, as one does not get senseless. These are all tricks of 'Maya'. Through the grace of 'Maya', this game is to be enjoyed personally and not for lending ear or for broadcasting to others.

We were talking about the sense of 'I'. 'Maya' no longer allows this sense of 'I' to prevail upon, nor it altogether disappears. In order to create a sense of awareness amongst the individual beings, Ramakrishna Deva did undergo a lot of austerity and spiritual practices. From time to time, he used to utter loudly. "Not 'I', not 'I', but thou art, oh Lord"; in other words, I am none, I am no body. You art all pervading.

When does the individual being utter the authority of "Thou". forsaking the sense of 'I',-let me narrate another illustration cited by Ramakrishna Deva-please listen. Cow is an animal, No sooner than a calf is born it starts lowing loudly. The expression sounding "Hamba" means 'Hameh' or it is I. When it grows older, the cultivator binds it to the yoke or a cart and compels it to labour day and night. But, it still does not give up the sound of 'I'. Becoming pretty old, emaciated and pale, it still has no respite from the hard labour but till then it does not give up the said moan. Therefter it dies. Then its skin is peeled off, cleaned and a drum is covered with that hide stretching it to the utmost. Even, in that state of the hide, if beaten, it repeats the sound of 'Ham'. It does not. at all, give up that sound. Lastly, traction fibre or cord is prepared by giving a gradual twist to its veins and intestines. In that state, even the sound of 'I' remains therein. After that, when the bow-man, strings the bow like instrument for cleaning cotton and beats it repeatedly, then also it makes a feeble cry with the repeated sound of 'I'. At last, when the same bow-man holding the bow-like instrument in his hand squats on the floor and hits hard the cord with the club in his right hand, then only it gives up the eternal moan of 'I' and begins to shout "It is thou", "It is thou". If an individual self is compelled to labour so hard, to wander to and fro, to work upto the point of vomitting blood and to get upset and shattered gradually by withdrawing all his wealth, relatives and respect, then he no longer shouts "It is I" repeatedly. Then only He cries "Oh Lord!, It is thou", "It is thou". Unless that embodied self is placed in that helpless position, the wicked sense of 'I', which has overpowered his inner mind does not leave him; this sense of 'I' is the "Maya" in its true form. Pathak-Just a little while ago you told that the object 'I' is not actually 'I' at all. It is "thou". Again, at the same time you have said that this sense of 'I' is mischievous. How then 'Thou' becomes wicked?

Devotee—The game of 'Maya' is aweful. So long, God-consciousness is not realised, till then, the sense of duality e.g. virtue or vice, good or evil, holy and unholy prevails. Once, you attain God-consciousness, nothing exists to be called evil or mischievious. Do you know, how long the sense of wicked 'I' persists? As long as a person does not realise the real matured entity of 'I'. Once you realise it, the same does not appear wicked. In the wicked state, the 'I' exists with all its vanity. The 'vanity' is 'Maya'; when the vanity or egoism disappears, the sense of 'I' is converted into the sense of 'Thou'. When this sense of 'I' is converted into 'Thou', the vanity of self or egoism no longer persists. Once the true 'I' is recognised, the egoism disappears so completely, that it cannot be traced even if you search into the three worlds. Ramakrishna Deva used to say from time to time, 'Look! I started to search for the self but could not find it anywhere. That unrivalled, omnipotent Blessed Lord being non-dual, indulging in sportive play by becoming countless I, creating this phenomenal world with the association of 'Maya'. He is a non-dual entity but is manifesting as countless 'I', having entered the infinite embodied souls. In each body, in all the states, no body else exists in reality excepting Him. this true knowledge is awakened, the sense of wicked 'I' no longer lingers. Whatever still remains is 'Thou' or the Supreme Being.

When the followers of the path of differential knowledge recognise the true self, they start saying "I am He", but the followers of the doctrine of devotion call "Thou are That". Thakur Ramakrishna was inwardly, full of self-knowledge but in order to teach the worldly people, he used to display the cult of devotion and love. As if, the appearance of Thakur is full of true knowledge but the same is veiled with the wrapper of devotion. Thakur knows very well that in this iron age, it is very difficult to follow the path of true knowledge and discrimination but it is quite easy to tread the path of devotion. Hence, the wrapper of devotion remained always on his body. In other words, in order to attain God-consciousness, he has advised every body to follow the path of devotion

Realisation of eternal 'I' is true self-knowledge. Once this self knowledge is accquired, the wicked 'I' runs away. It does not remain any longer there. Realisation of true know-

ledge enables an individual the self-knowledge or it may be said that attainment of supreme consciousness amounts to realisation of true eternal wisdom. Do you know, how the sense of 'I' persists in the individual self in the state of perfect wisdom? It is like this; unless and until the full noon is attained, in other words, the sun rises to its zenith, till then shadows of objects are cast on the ground. As soon as the sun reaches its zenith, the shadows are no longer found when you look around. Exactly it in a similar manner, as soon as the true knowledge like the self effulgent sun is fully attained, that wicked sense of 'I' cannot be traced any longer. It can then be realised that the sense of wicked 'I' was following the self, like a shadow. The shadow of any object is only a mere image and unreal. Hence, the sense of 'I' is likewise unreal. In a state of ignorance, the sense of 'I' persists in a veiled state. With the dawning of perfect knowledge, the shadow or sense of 'I' disappears. What is it that still persists? It is only 'He' exists whose image consisted of the shadow. This vision does not continue perpetually. As soon as one becomes absorbed in the phenomenal world, that sense of 'I' again prevails. But, in this state, its driving force is not felt.

VII

Once this self knowledge is realised, it is perceived that the same Blessed Lord assumes unlimited forms in his Divine Sport of this creation. Having a vision of this aspect, amounts to direct awareness of the universal self. You may remember, I have told you quite earlier that there is an universal image of Ramakrishna Deva. This is his all pervasive appearance. That Sri Ramakrishna whom we have seen with a figure equivalent to a normal human form, is now being visioned as if existing in each and every object of this world. This universe is permeated with Sri Ramakrishna. Though Sri Ramakrishna appears as an ordinary human being, yet he pervades through everything of this universe. Those who find fault with image worship, who explain idolatory as an incorrect conception, their perception of ignorance is found out when this self knowledge dawns in them. In the initial stage, absolute faith and devotion of Thakur towards Mother Kali, Keshab Sen asked him "Sir, how great is your Mother Kali?"

Thakur said in reply, "Oh Keshab! you had been to London, naturally you have seen the vast ocean. My Mother Kali greater than those oceans". On another occasion, Keshab Babu together with his disciples was walking along with through a particular road, when somebody was chopping off a branch of a roadside tree. At the sight of that, Thakur began to cry loudly in an unbearable manner saying "Oh! they are striking at my Mother". With this example, he revealed to Keshab babu that Mother Kali not only appears in a normal human form but in true form, she is the creative energy as well as the Supreme Divine conciousness. On the other hand, how very real is Mother Kali in the form of a living human being of normal size, as also there are no limits to her appearance in any form. Holding a piece of cotton before the nostril of the Mother Kali, he proved beyond any doubt that the Mother Kali was inhaling and ex-haling. Listen to a day's incident. Thakur was sitting on his small cot; a number of devotees were also present near him. Suddenly, rushing through the eastern door of his room, Thakur appeared on the courtyard of the temple complex from where the entire temple of the Mother Kali is visible. Being extremely apprehensive and mentally disturbed. he looked up towards the nine pinnacles of the temple pointing his hands that way cried at the top of his voice, saying repeatedly "Beware Mother! you may fall down". Saying this, he became nearly insensible to the outside world. Catching hold of his body, the devotees carried him to his own room. After sometime, on being accosted Thakur replied "The Mother Kali was walking idly along the cornice of the pinnacles of the temple like a staggering drunkard. Lest She would fall down. I became so extremely nervous with this apprehension of the danger.

On hearing the Divine Sport of Ramakrishna you may, now. well understand in how many ways the believers of personal God enjoy the relish of savor. They perceive Mother Kali as a normal living being as well as all pervading Supreme Consciousness. One of them asked Thakur "what is the difference between the religion of the Hindus and that of the followers

of formless Brahman?" Thakur replied to them "have you ever seen the playing of a flute". Where a flute is played, two persons usually blow the flutes. One of them plays the second fiddle of the concert, while the remaining person produces the various musical tones. Those who follow the 'Brahma' religion, play the second fiddle while the worshippers of personal God play with the different musical notes.

Playing with the various musical notes means the believers of personal God take pleasure in the different forms of the Blessed Lord, i.e. as a self-luminous spirit, as the cosmic intelligence, in certain forms and without any form. Sri Ramakrishna having followed the different paths of spiritual practices enjoyed the heavenly bliss of the Lord by all sorts of (Sadhana) religious practices and explained to the world at large that everything is possible with the Blessed Lord. He can be and become everything. One more thing, he often repeated that no body should try to limit his attributes. No body should say emphatically that he is like this and not that or cannot become that. Once a particular opinion is expressed about the Blessed Lord, it will tantamount to limiting that infinite existence, or it will amount to interfering with his omnipotence.

Amongst the professional preachers of religion of this place, a remark is very predominantly prevalent that they say 'What we are preaching or our opinion and comments are only correct and true'. Whatever others say or do is incorrect. My salutations go to those intelligent preachers of false knowledge of this type!

With the removal of the sense of 'I' and 'Mine', living beings become liberated. The saying of Sri Ramakrishna goes like, "'I' shall become liberated when 'I' will cease to exist". Do you know who reveals to you the two states of bondage and emancipation? It is the mind. If your mind convinces you that you are in bondage or attachment, then you are truly in bondage. Again, when the same mind indicates to you that you are free and liberated, you become an emancipated soul. All these are the sportive play of the mind. It is the mind which works like its sense organs. So long as

the mind remains fettered, till then it is constantly full of doubts. In this state, the mind may be called scepticism. While the mind is free, it may be called consciousness. Mind and intelligence are two different things. But, in the purified state, they are one and the same and it is then named consciousness. Although, the Blessed Lord is beyond the reach of mind and intellect, yet at the same time, he can be comprehended through this mind and intelligence. This means, in the sceptical state, he is beyond perception but can be realised through purified mind, sublime intelligence and pure consciousness. That purified mind, sublime intelligence and consciousness through whose assistance this phenomenal world can become conscious, one can have a direct supreme consciousness and in that state the individual mind and intelligence (the limited consciousness) may also dissolve completely in the supreme consciousness. Let me recite to you a portion of a song-please listen. Thakur used to sing this song many a times.

"My mind is charmed at the feet of the Divine Mother, as the black-bee gets charmed by a blue lotus...

Mother! your feet are black, bees are also black, so black

mingles with black and gets dissolved" and so on.

When the mind is deeply absorbed at the blue lotus feet of the Divine Mother Kali, mind reaches the state of superconsciousness and becomes one with Her; in other words, it does no longer remain ordinary mind, it becomes purified mind or consciousness. In this state, it has lost its original colour i.e. it has absorbed the complexion that is the colour of the feet of 'Shyama, the Mother'. On the other hand, the Divine Mother is the embodiment of consciousness; mind-consciousness being of the same origin as that of pure consciouness, the pitch dark complexion merges with the black colour and the diversity disappears with this unification. The earthly sport comes to an end and the foundamental truth shines in its pristine purity.

Being purified, if the mind becomes once transformed into consciousness, the Supreme Spirit immediately embraces it. It

means, when the mind is transformed into consciousness, it becomes similar to Divine consciousness. Similarity makes the union inevitable. Unless they are similar, one cannot unite with the other. Milk will mix with milk only; though clarified butter is produced from the milk itself, still the clarified butter does not mix up with milk. When purified butter is poured into milk, it will float distinctly on the surface. But when milk is converted into purified butter, only then the distinction between the two disappears and they will unify or mix together completely. This phenomenal world has been created by the association of 'Maya' with the Absolute consciousness. As soon as this phenomenal world is freed from 'Maya', it will be again transformed into pure consciousness. In this state, the diversity becomes unity and that too of what kind? It is within the reach of direct perception of Him only.

How the supreme consciousness has been transformed into this phenomenal world after possessing the attributes of 'Maya' and who else exists in all these millions of objects in the material world excepting Him? Behold! how on this earth, that undivided one whole indulges in the sport? Mind, intelligence, emotion, egoism, cosmic soul, individual being, all these are the various names of the same substance.

Pathak—How are the cosmic soul and individual soul related to each other?

Devotee—All the worldly games revolve round these i.e. the Supreme Consciousness and the individual self. Consciousness may be called the Supreme Spirit as well as the individual self. Para 'Brahman' of the followers of the path of knowledge, the self of the yogins and the Blessed Lord of the devotees are basically identical or the different names of the same Reality As countless sparks of fire emerge out of a conflagration, similarly the individual beings are created out of the Universal spirit. With the assistance of his own cosmic energy 'Maya', the one undivided Supreme Spirit is being transformed into innumerable individuals of various races, appearances, attributes and colours, etc.—in other words, He is the creator of all of them. The individuals are moving about within the universal

self, they are created out of that cosmic spirit and finally dissolve in the same. What is an individual self against the back ground of the cosmic self—let me narrate to you with a simile,—please listen. The Supreme Being is like an ocean which is boundless fathomless and whose shores are not visible. There is no beginning and no ending of this ocean. Do you know how does the individual self exist in this ocean? As if, thousands of receptacles of innumerable sizes are immersed in the water of that ocean. Each one of these pots filled with water is the individual self.

Amongst the individual souls, those countless bodies. appearances, receptacles—they all have been created out of that water. I have explained to you earlier that the subtle form has been transformed into gross form. As water vapour exists in a very subtle state, clouds are formed from that water vapour, particles of water appear from the clouds, very fine particles of water are transformed into drops of water, again water comes out of those drops and that water is again freezed into ice. Similarly, the extreme subtle pure consciousness becomes the substratum of all these in their gross form. substratum, that Supreme Spirit exists in the form of water The individual self is neither born nor does it die. It is born in water, lives in the same water and ultimately dissolves into the water. As that individual self which remains within the pot in the form of water, dissolves in that water when the pot is shattered; likewise, the pot is also transformed from the gross to the subtle state and then mixes with that water. Do you know which phenomenon is called death? The water of that pot when shattered mixes with the water of the sea and again fills another pot; this phenomenon is called death. As subtle form is manifested in a gross form, similarly, a gross body may be transformed into a subtle body. An ice becomes water when melted; from water, vapour and clouds etc. are again formed

I just said that the Supreme Spirit is like the vast ocean, it may also be comprehended so or compared to the limitless expanse of the sky. I have heard that in the Védas, it is called the great sky (ether).

"The Vedas compared yourself (the individual self) to the sky limited by a pot, (full of water).

Breaking up the pot is called death of the body, by building virtue and vice, respect and worthiness in nothingness

you have lost everything in this life".

As the gross form of vapour is cloud, drops of rain, water, and ice; likewise, the gross form of ether is the five elements of nature. Again, these five principal elements have been compounded to become the phenomenal world. As the gross state is transformed from the subtle state, and subtle manifests itself into gross form, so the Divine Sport emanates from the eternal spirit, such Divine Sport again dissipates in the Absolute. One can go over to the other realm following this principle; again, he can similarly come back to the divine play ground from that absolute state. Paramhansha Deva used to call this phenomenon as ascending and descending process. He used to describe it in another interesting way. The eternal comes down in the phenomenal and the Divine Sport is game, so the phenomena exhibit the eternal. Hence, he did neither preach that this phenomenal world is unreal like Sankaracharya nor did he refute his views altogether.

About the emperical self, Ramakrishna Deva has another explanation-please listen. The empirical self is nothing but that universal self itself. The difference lies in that there is no 'Maya' in the Absolute existence but nescience is intermingled with the empirical self. That Absolute Spirit with the limiting adjunct of 'Maya' becomes the individual self. Though 'Maya' is present in the Absolute Spirit, still it is ineffective. His own Maya cannot delude Him at all. That 'Maya' can have no impress on Him. As there is poison inside the mouth of a snake but it cannot do any harm to that snake, similarly, though 'Maya' is in Him, but it cannot overwhelm 'the Supreme Spirit; it can bewilder the individual self. The nature of the Supreme Spirit is non-attachment, whereas the individual being is always attached. The Supreme Consciousness is like the eternal witness whereas the individual self has to face the consequences of his actions. The individual self has to experience all the joys

and sorrows, virtue and vice and good and evil. These qualities cannot reach the Absolute Spirit. Do you know how is that? It resembles the smoke. If it grazes a wall, the wall is stained but it cannot leave any mark or stain in the sky. It is Lord Shiva, who is the Supreme Self and is free from Maya (Cosmic nescience) and he is one and the same with the individual self in nescience. As soon as this limited self gives up the shackles of delusion (individual nescience) it begets its true self. In other words, it realizes its essence or the nature of Lord Siva. When the individual self becomes Lord Siva, it is liberated from the apprehension of the cycle of births and deaths.

VIII

Pathak—What is the significance of the phenomenon of the Supreme Reality being, eternal witness and the limited self suffering from the consequences of his actions?

Devotee-Whatever I have heard from the holy mouth Thakur Ramakrishna on this subject, let me tell you-please listen. One day Thakur said "during the period of my spiritual practices and meditation, while I was sitting one day underneath the cluster of the five sacred trees, suddenly my attention was attracted towards the trees. I found that two birds were sitting on a particular branch of the tree. One bird was motionless and still and not moving at all, as if, it was made of pith. The other bird was exactly of opposite nature. Once it was desending, at other time, frisking, sometime playing and again was producing various notes. After sometime, the bird which was remaining still and quiet, opened its mouth, and the other restless bird entered into the mouth of the former. As soon as the latter entered its mouth, the mo tionless bird closed its mouth. Observing this phenomenon Thakur realised that the Supreme Spirit exists as the eternally quiet witness, while the individual self indulges in similing dancing, crying, and facing the consequences of pleasures and pain but dissolves in the eternal Supreme Spirit in due time. Pathak-When the Supreme Spirit has become the individual self, what is the necessity then of this difference between the two? Again, what is the type of dissolution of the limited self with the universal?

Devotee-I have told you a little earlier, that one undivided beginningless, endless, unchangeable, formless existence, incomprehensible with the assistance of mind, intellect and sense organs, nameless all pervading supreme spirit, the prime cause of creation of this phenomenal world, by its own omnipotent power has manifested into various forms, colours, qualities tastes, smells, and touches, while indulging in his Divine Sport, though he is an undivided whole. He assumes a particular or different states or attributes created out of the energy 'Maya'. Take for an example—Girish Babu: his name Girish, by caste he is of noble 'Kayastha, descent, a dramatist. a scholar, a great poet, manager of the theatrical stage, a teacher etc. Each one of these epithets is his attribute. In reality, he is without any epithet but with the attachment of these epithets he is existing as an individual. The moment he will forshake these epithets realising his true self, he will merge immediately with the Absolute Spirit. Have you seen a vast field? There are thousands of clusters of barriers in each such field. The barriers are nothing but segments inside that wide field. Because the segments are bounded on all sides by barriers hence they are called clusters. If you remove all these barriers and free the clusters, then that field which was fragmented by hundreds of boundaries, will now be converted into a vast open field. In this way, as soon as the individual self is freed from the various attributes, it will be dissolved in the boundless and endless cosmic self. The process of severance of connection from the attributes by an individual self is called dissolution with the Supreme Spririt.

Pathak—Is then the Universal Self according to you is without any form and beyond comprehension by the mind and intellect?

Devotee—He is both with and without form. As the sky or ether and the air, though formless yet have some sort of visible appearance; similarly, the Supreme Spirit though formless has in a way some appearance. In other words, the Supreme Spirit assumes the form of those particular bodies in which He is embodied. In the body of a human being. He

has a human appearance. In the body of a cow, He assumes the form of a cow; in the receptacle of a tree, He assumes the appearance of a tree. Water too has no fixed form or shape of its own but if it is kept in a dish, it will appear as round like the shape of the dish. If you put it in a jar, it will look like a jar. If kept in a big earthen pot, it will look like the shape of that pot. The same applies to this case also. Though He is beyond the conception of mind and intellect, it still can be comprehended by this mind and intellect. Where the mind and intellect is impure or erroneous, there, it is beyond the reach of human beings. On the other hand, it can be realised through a clean mind and pure intelligence. Being possessed of the attributes of 'Maya', He has become limited, though in reality, He is unlimited. He undergoes transformation, though intrinsically He is unchangable; though unable to be identified by name, yet He reveals himself in a name. In other words, being the Supreme Spirit, He is also the individual self but in a different role. Hence, the universal teacher, Lord Ramakrishna while speaking on these subjects used to say, with a smile on his face that He is so and so and such and such. Apart from these, He is also everything else which exists on this universe. Thakur clarified this idea from all doubts, made a synthesis of all religions and built up the edifice of a universal religion. By uprooting the animosity and hatred ween one religion and another which existed from time immemorial, in the Incarnation of Sri Ramakrishna, he assumed the name of redeemer of discord. Whatever Thakur has said or acted upon, they are approved by the holy scriptures. Yet, he has imparted a new or special significance into all The speciality lies in that, he did neither discard nor defy anything. Hence, to teach the common people, he said everything is true, every path is genuine. You should quarrel amongst one another. Whatever opinion and path one intends to follow, he should follow that path and such instructions with a clean mind and earnest longing. He will certainly attain God-consciousness, some one either a few days earlier, others a few days later. Followers of all sects of religion used to pay a visit to Thakur. He used to fulfil the wishes of all of

them. One who has grasped and caught hold of Thakur as theguide and support for realising God consciousness, has been successful in achieving that state. Realisation of the truenature of God is within easy reach like the fried rice and sweetened parched paddy in the store of their Thakur. On your asking, you will get a garmentfull of them. In a state of ecstatic emotion he used to say "if you desire wealth and a son, approach the famous 'Lord Taraknath'. But if you have an earnest longing for the Blessed Lord, come here".

Pathak—What is it that you pray from Thakur or for what object you express your earnest desire to him?

Devotee—I pray to him like this. Oh Thakur! under no circumstances I may have a feeling of dislike for you. Nor, should I have ever any inclination to give up your worship and self-less service to you. These two are my earnest prayers. Pathak—The word "Blessed Lord" is often heard only. It also comes to our ear that people realise God-consciousness or

also comes to our ear that people realise God-consciousness or have a direct vision of Him. We have also heard that some people talk to Him or indulge in sportive play with Him. At other places, some say, He is without any form and beyond perception by the mind and intelligence. The Yogins again say He can be realised through the path of Yoga. If it is so, what then is the exact nature of the Blessed Lord?

Devotee—Your question is your answer. Whatever you may speak of Him or think of Him, He will appear before you in that form or appearance. I have heard from Thakur that one devout disciple asked his spiritual guide the path he should follow in his spiritual practices, meditation and worship. The spiritual guide said in reply, what thing attracted him most; in other words, whom did he love sincerely? The disciple replied "I like that black buffalo most". On hearing his reply, the preceptor advised him to meditate on that black buffalo. On acting accordingly, the devout follower of the spiritual guide realised the Blssed Lord in the appearance of that black buffalo. On the other hand, the sages, mendicants, ascetics, hermits and yogins are engaged in sprittual practices and constant meditation from time immemorial. They are having a

vision of Him in such a gigantic form through the power of their meditation and austere penance that they cannot measure even a fraction of His greatness or vastness. One who is infinite and eternal in one place, is again with a form in another place. You probably heard about the Divine Incarnations in the form of a boar and a dwarf. In the Incarnation of Lord Krishna, he is the little child of Mother Yashoda and a friend of the shepherd boys. In the Incarnation of Lord Rama, he had to go over to the forest at the conspiracy of his step mother. He who exists within the lotus like heart of the individual beings as a minute spot, is the Supreme Master of creation. Millions of universe exist within each pore of the skin of his body. Where the powers of sight, taste, smell, sound and touch cannot reach, there it is He who has been transformed into these five organs. Again, He is the enjoyer of these five qualities. One who is much more severe than a thunderbolt, at the same time, is softer than the full blown petals of the lotus. He reveals himself exactly in the form as one thinks of or looks upon Him. Following this idea, you may now realise how the Blessed Lord is?

IX

Pathak—What becomes his state who realises God consciousness?

Devotee—An individual who has achieved God-consciousness attains the state which is reached by the potatoes and brinjals when they are fully boiled. When Divine consciousness is attained, human beings lose their animal propensities altogether. His nature is completely transformed into a different channel and the characteristics of human beings no longer persist in him. The ordinary man or the domestic people will presume him to be a mad person. On the one hand, the general mass of the land belongs to a particular type, on the other hand, one particular fellow is of a quite different type. If, one is not alike the multitude of people, he is presumed as a mentally deranged man. I have once told you of this topic earlier. Amongst the public, only a few persons really adore Him. Those who are prominent amongst those few people are real saints who are fully dedicated to the service of the

Supreme Being. They are searching for God but not yet realised Him. Amongst the saints, one in thousands, realize God—consciousness. Hence, saint Ramaprosad sang a song:

"One or two kites are cut off amongst hundred thousands, Oh! Mother, thou clap your hands with a smile".

Following the inner meaning of this quotation, you may, now, understand how many people are there who are real human beings and how many brutes?

Pathak—We were talking about the individual soul. My attention is fully absorbed in this subject only. Necessarily, I cannot refrain from asking you a few more questions on the subject.

My first question is—if the individual self is nothing but the cosmic self, how then the cosmic self has transformed itself into so many empirical selves of innumerable nature varieties and appearances?

Devotee—That the subject matter is of a grave, abstruse and complicated nature—there is no doubt about it. This is a very puzzling subject, which I told you once at length. Let me explain to you once again. During the rains, have you noticed countless bubbles in the water of a big tank? It is now to be clarified, what those water-bubbles are? What material they are made of? What are the ingredients inside those bubbles? As a result of direct vision and analysis—it transpired that those bubbles are made of water and there is nothing within them except water. Exactly in a similar manner, the individual self is created out of the cosmic self and the universal self only exists within each of these individual selves.

In this connection, you must clearly understand one thing—that the bubbles are merely born from the water but none of them is that full big tank. Similarly, from one undivided eternal supreme substratum, millions of individual souls are created but none of these souls is that Universal Being. In other words, as those bubbles differ from the tank itself, likewise the individual souls differ from the Supreme Conciousness. I should have said the ocean instead of the large tank. I have

mentioned tank only to explain to you with a straight-forward illustration. As an ocean is existing from time immemorial as a vast sheet of water, without having any material change, in the same way, the Universal Consciousness exists eternally in its own absolute and immutable state. As waves play their part in the sea, the game in this universe is played by birth, existence and dissolution; similarly, these ever changing created objects have their constant sportive play in the midst of the Cosmic self.

You may, however, ask here—as countless bubbles evolved with the drops of rain on the water of the ocean, when there is no existence of a second object except the universal consciousness, how then this changing phenomenal world have been created by associating what material substance with the Universal Consciousness? The reply to this question is that the rain water is nothing materially different from the water of that Sea. So long, it was held in suspension in the ether as cloud, which has now been transformed into so many drops of rain and poured into the same source from which it was formed as cloud. The result is the formation of bubbles and waves. Here, the case is exactly identical. Cosmic energy is created, out of the Universal Consciousness. That energy again dissolves in the Supreme Consciousness, resulting in the creation of the phenomenal world and its total beings. As there is no intrinsic difference between the water of the sea and that of the rains-both are water, similarly there is no inherent difference between the Supreme Self and His energy. Both basically the same thing, but they are called by different names in different places and forms. For example, Brahman, Supreme Conciousness, the Blessed Lord, Mahamaya (the Goddess Durga) Mother Kali, Lord Krishna, Lord Rama, Christ, and Allah etc. represent the same Reality. Each person following his own creed, calls Him by different names. Though devotees or the ascetics are at variance while calling by name or expressing their feelings but they all unite at the source or ultimate reality.

There is no second object excepting that one undivided

whole. That unity has manifested itself in diversity in His Divine Sport. Those diverse appearances exist on that integral unity and will dissolve in that undivided whole ultimately at the end. The objects of this creation are born eternally, they exist for a limited period and dissolve at sometime or other. Whatever material is created, cannot be destroyed, only at times, they undergo transformation in qualities, complexion, appearances, and disappearance. Hence, this creation is called ever changing.

Those who have acquired this knowledge through grace of the Blessed Lord, are neither gratified nor perturbed for births and deaths. This (awareness) knowledge is the raft for crossing the ocean of this world. This awarness is like the talisman for protection from the three kinds of afflictions (viz. adhyatmik, adhidaibik and adhibhautic). With the help of this knowledge (true), the human being becomes liberated and goes beyond both joys and sufferings. Once this aware ness is awakened, the individual self can emancipate himself from the attachment of this world and no longer he has to pass through the cycles of births and deaths. Thakur used to compare this state to the earthen pot which has been fully burnt. If an earthen pot is broken in its unburnt condition, the potter gives again a new shape to it but if it is broken after being burnt no remoulding or re-shaping can be done to it any longer Likewise, the fire of true knowledge converts an individual soul into such a state by roasting in experience that he has not to go through the cycle of births, once the body is destroyed. Thakur used to cite another illustration comparing such a soul as have attained such a stage. That illustration is the boiled (fried) paddy. When paddy is boiled in fire, it loses all its power of germination; so those virtuous souls who become purified in the fire of true knowledge, are not born again. Even if an awakened soul gives up his mortal frame and dies at his sweet will, the vicious sin arising out of an act of suicide cannot even affect his image.

How the one fundamental Reality has become so many objects of various types, how the bones are formed from the semen and blood, all these are within the knowledge of the

Divine Sport of the Mother. That same underlying substratum is the base of diversified objects, which have been transformed into big and small, one and many, according to variation of the eternal energy. Where there is greater application of energy, there is higher manifestation. Where there is lesser cosmic energy, there is smaller revelation.

Here, there is a profound bewildering matter—that is as follows: where there is greater manifestation of the cosmic energy, that also is as infinite and eternal as the cosmic energy itself. So also, where there is lesser manifestation of that power or energy, there also He is unlimited and boundless. In whatever direction you may proceed, that way is also endless and eternal like the fundamental source of energy. As is the large, so is the small. There cannot be any fragmentation of the undivided whole. In the field of Divine Sport, though it looks like different fragments, but the parts themselves are like infinite and eternal whole. Hence, Thakur Ramakrishna used to say "You will neither be able to comprehend the minute form of the Blessed Lord, nor his boundless phenomenon".

Pathak—Where the cosmic energy has been fragmented into various parts through the influence of the Divine Sport, how the undivided Supreme Consciousness exists therein?

Devotee—Thakur used to say that as the piston of the syringe remains inside the pipe of the syringe without being united, in other words—without being attached, so the indivisible Supreme Spirit does not discharge any function but exists as an witness only. But, the diversified souls feel joys as well as sorrows.

Pathak—According to your opinion, the Supreme Spirit is the underlying substance which has been transformed into countless individual beings of various nature, appearances and attributes. What then the mind and intelligence etc. are?

Devotee—In order to enable the limited selves to enjoy their own taste and beauties of creation, the Supreme Spirit has bestowed upon them the instruments of mind, intelligence and other sense organs. These are the instruments and media of

the individual beings to enjoy their pleasures and beauties of this phenomenal world.

Since the individual nescience is correlated and mingled with the individual self, the same has been dissociated from the Cosmic Self. The individual self is unable to recognise that it is the same ultimate reality as the Supreme Spirit. He is agog with the cry of selfishness through the influence of Maya. On the other hand, the Lord has hidden himself beneath his very eves within the beauties and pleasures of this creation. The individual selves have discovered the pleasant taste of this world. Further, they have been endowed with the necessary instruments for enjoying the taste of these pleasures. Who will now debar them from enjoying those objects. Presuming this world as the primary source of enjoyment, they have now engaged themselves in playing these games. The Lord too has not forsaken his creation. If someone is able to get his conception in due course, then he will be able to reach Him with the help of those instruments only. These instruments have such special qualities as, in whatever direction you may lead them they will proceed accordingly. If they are directed towards enjoyment of beauty and pleasure, they will reveal the beauty and taste of enjoyment. Again, if they are guided towards the Supreme Spirit, they will reveal Him to you. But, there is a snag, once you are overwhelmed with beauty and pleasure. it is very difficult to divert them to the other direction. But bear one thing in mind; being dazzled through the influence of Maya, the individual beings have taken for granted that they are independent and master of their own selves but in reality that is not true. The controlling reins of the mouth of those beings are in the hands of the Lord. Whenever, he would wish he will divert the direction of the mental instruments which are engaged in the enjoyment of the beauties and pleasures, with the help of those other instruments which are available in his The names of those instruments are discrimination renunciation, true knowledge and selfless devotion. It is the mind and intelligence which have sunk into the abyss of 'Vishalakshmi' will come to your resue from degeneration

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Following this clue, you may now, realise how the mind and intelligence are fundamentally linked with the individual soul and what their nature is?

X

Pathak-What is true knowledge and selfless devotion please? Devotee-What is the exact nature of selfless devotion cannot be openly described. Rather, a wave of this devotion arises. something of which can better be described. Do you know what that wave is? That is the earnest longing for having a direct communion of the soul with Divinity and for service to the Lord with selfless devotion. The name of that underlying instinct from which this tendency is developed is called selfless devotion. That is the only emerald in the store-house of the Blessed Lord. Hence, he is very fond of this quality. Not only he loves this, but also he adores that soul wherein this quality is developed. There is no special procedure to acquire devotion. It entirely depends on the compassion of the Blessed Lord. His grace is devotion for him. He bestows such quality in human beings of his own free will-do you know, how is that? The nature of the Blessed Lord is exactly like that of a small child. The father has presented a ball of sweetmeat in his hand. The child sat there holding very fast and tight on the sweetmeat. In the meantime, if the father or a near relative of that boy tries to get hold of that sweetmeat ball, instead of passing it off, he will hide his fist at once inside his belly with that sweetmeat. Being annoyed with that behaviour he will cry out "I shall not part with it". Thereafter, as is the nature of a child, he may call an unknown passerby who was going that way with the indication of his hand and give away that sweetmeat to him. In the matter of imparting such devotion to an individual, the Blessed Lord acts in a similar manner. By imparting the devotional quality, he attracts an unknown person hear Him. In the first opportunity he imparts that devotional quality, later he makes him a staunch devout. With Thakur Ramakrishna, this sense of devotion is like the touch-stone. In case, somebody was upto the liking of Sri Ramakrishna, he used to accept him, otherwise discarded him As a trader in gold, adores gold from whatever source it is

available, similarly, Thakur used to take care of him in whom he discovered such devotional tendency, may he be a Hindu, a Barbarian, a Brahmin, or a Christian. Wherever he found, whether in prostitutes, debauchees or drunkards that devotion he used to adore them. Sri Ramakrishna's love for devotion is an adequate proof that he is the Blessed Lord. Of whatever status, nature, country or religion may he belong to, if Thakur could discover an urge for devotion within him, that person would automatically become his kindred person, dearer than his own self. Have you noticed another innate nature of Thakur? Whoever will watch, he will be able to recognise easily that Thakur himself is the Blessed Lord who is utterly fond of devotion. In whichever soul devotion is spontaneous, he is living, as if, in such body. Suppose a person is full of devotion ingrained in his nature, but he has never met Thakur in the Divine Incarnation of Sri Ramakrishna; Thakur would hasten to catch him if he could spot him once and make him a kindred person within a short time. As the head office of the telegraph department has direct links with all the distant suboffices wherever they are situated in the state, exactly in the same way, I can distinctly visualize that Thakur Ramakrishna has close connection with every devout follower wherever he may stay. As a testimony to this fact, let me read out 210th page of the twentieth part of the fourth number of the magazine named "Nabya Bharat" whose caption is "Chaste female hunter". please listen to this writing: "Whatever Mr. Digby, a member of Parliament has written about Ramakrishna Paramhansha on that day, is there an Indian who will not be encouraged in his mind on going through that article?". Mr. Digby has said "the most outstanding personalities of this century in England are Messers Robert Browning and John Ruskin but they too are groping in the dark as compared to the illiterate Ramakrishna".

Brother! watch carefully the greatness of devotion as also the glory of Thakur Ramakrishna; what a gulf of difference exists between Thakur Ramakrishna and Mr. Digby. Thakur has implanted such an idea within the heart of Mr. Digby that becoming bewildered, he compared the two outstanding scholars of his own country as totally insignificant to him. Hail Thakur Ramakrishna! his devotion is highly exemplary. As the efficacy of light can only be judged in the background of darkness, similarly, the greatness of a devout soul can be perceived through the heart of an irreverent person.

Mr. Digby living in such a distant place beyond the seven seas, merely heard the name of Sri Ramakrishna and a little about his life, sayings and teachings! With only this asset at his disposal, he could comprehend the greatness of Thakur and write a number of articles about his glory, considering him with the highest esteem and profoundly venerable. He further gave a wide publicity to all those observations with selfless devotion and devoid of any pride.

On the other hand, brethren of our own country, living so close to Thakur, after hearing his talks on various subjects with their own ears, and analysing his supernatural life, came to the conclusion that he was a wild crazy man. Not only were they remain contented by concluding Thakur as a mad man but also they simultaneously came to the conclusion that they were correct in their findings. Do you know what did they decide? They concluded that they themselves were very clever, ingenuous, intelligent, accomplished, wise, respectable and spirited; in other words, they alone were possessed of all the fine qualities as could be attributable

Why did the foreigners only realise the greatness of Thakur while our own countrymen took him otherwise? The reason behind this is that the British people are full of devotion in their heart but the people of this country are devoid of any devotion in their mind. Our Thakur too is more intelligent and prudent then those clever people. On the one hand, he is full of compassion and if he found any person starving, he would shed tears from his eyes and moisten the soil with such drops of tears. But, while implanting the sense of devotion, he was even more stingy hearted than a miser. Nobody is yet born in this world who will be able to procure something from him surreptitiously by bluffing! On the occasion of imparting the

sense of devotion and reverance, the benefit was never bestowed hither and thither. In the state of emotional france, he used to say "If I mean, I can convert a sour fruit into a large Fazli mango but what is the necessacity of acting in such a manner? I have a garden of Fazli mangoes". If some one would pray to him for arousing the sense of reverence and devotion, he used to sing a song:

"I am not reluctant to grant salvation, but I feel distressed to arouse the sense of devotion; whoever is lucky enough to acquire devotion and adoration for me.

is there any body who can measure his stature?

He becomes the triumphant Lord of the three worlds.

This special devotion is felt in my Vrindaban (the holy city), which is beyond comprehension of others except the milk men and milk maids of Vrindaban; for that reason, I surmount the obstacles put forth by Nanda in his own house over my head, by paying respect to him as my father.

Listen 'Chandrabali'! when I talk of devotion, liberation is plentifully available but devotion is rarely found.

In order to acquire that kind of devotion, I am ready to serve as the gateman of the palace of emperor 'Bali' in his dewelling in the infernal regions'.

As an example of self-less devotion, the milk men and milk maids of Vrindaban are the loftiest illustrations. Now, you may realise what is the innate meaning of devotion!

What is self-less devotion is also the same substance as true knowledge. But, there is some difference in taste. Let me explain that in detail to you with an illustration. Have you taken a soft ball-shaped sweetmeat (Sandesh) as well as a piece of sugar candy. Both are sweet, but as there is a gulf of difference in taste between the candy and the soft sandesh, similarly, there lies the difference between true knowledge and self-less devotion. Devotion is like a soft ball of sandesh and knowledge is candy.

Let me explain to you this subject with a further example. how these two differ with each other. Have you seen the Hooghly Bridge or the Bridge over the river Ganges? There are footpaths on both sides of the bridge for pedestrian traffic. Over and above, there are guarded fences on the edge of the foot path. The idea of fencing the footpaths is that, in whatever manner may the passers by move over the foot path, there is no likelyhood of their being thrown over to the water of the Ganges. In the case in question, devotion is precisely like the foot path on the bridge and knowledge is exactly like the fence. While following the path of devotion if anybody inadvertently reaches a stage of going astray from his adopted path, knowledge saves him from that distracted position. Where there is devotion. knowledge also co-exists therein. The exact illustration of this is the burning fire. Where the fire is in a stage of conflagration, the presence of the wind will surely be there. That knowledge which is mingled with devotion may be called knowledge blended with devotion and reverence. While, where it is in a state of sugar candy, it is there in a pure state, hard task master and blunt. What has been stated by Thakur through his own lips as an analogy and comparison of devotion with knowledge, is this,-true knowledge is of masculine nature while devotion is feminine.

Though you may attain God-consciousness through the path of true knowledge as also through the path of devotion but the specific difference between them lies in this. What Thakur used to tell is that an wealthy person has his outhouse and inner apartments. Any and everybody has the privilege of entering the out-house but only the ladies have the necessary permission to enter the inner apartments. The male folk were not allowed to enter there. Likewise, the Blessed Lord has also inner apartment and out-house. Knowledge is of masculine nature, he is permitted to enter the out-house. If the Supreme Lord stays in the out-house, then only knowledge may meet him. Otherwise, knowledge has to take his seat awaiting the opportunity of the arrival of the Supreme Lord at the out-house. But, devotion is of feminine nature, if she

cannot find the Lord within the out-house, she will at once proceed towards the inner apartments and meet Him there. Devotion has the privilege of entering into both the out-house as well as the inner apartment. Until God-consciousness is attained, through the power of knowledge blended with devotion, till then, the individual soul has to take a physical body and again to give up that body i.e. the cycle of births and deaths goes on un-abated.

Pathak—I find much pleasure on hearing these talks. These are ensuring some confidence without risking anything. From beginning to end, I feel these are the actions of the Lord. Now, a question arises—how or in what manner does an individual soul enter a physical body and also give up the same?

Devotee-Have you watched the situation that is created at the time of an eclipse of the sun or he moon? Here also the process is the same. When the demon either eclipses the sun or the moon, or releases them, nobody is able to detect that. But, whatever reaction is observed on the body of the sun or the moon, that indicates the state of either eclipse or release of them. Similarly, the stimulating pulsation or its absence is the indication of its entering or leaving a physical body. By certain general symptoms of the physical body, one can realise the soul is still lingering within the body or has left it. A pleasant saying is prevalent on this subject. At the time of birth, the soul makes its appearance with a body but while dying, it departs with that body. This is my practical realisation While giving up the mortal body, the act of dissolution of the body is very apparent but there is no practical experience as to how the individual soul assumes its body at the time of birth The individual self is a palpable doll in the hands of the Supreme Spirit. The individual self himself can neither get to know his birth nor death. There are a lot of tricks in the sportive play of 'Maya'. 'Maya' will not allow you any opportunity whatsoever to you, to realise that she (cosmic nescience) herself, on entering your body is playing her tricks like the gipsy commanding the monkey to dance. Until and unless the individual nescience can be overcome, none will be able to enter the Kingdom of Heaven.

Pathak-How 'Maya' can be won over?

Devotee-Once Maya (Cosmic nescience) can be recognised, it will depart in no time. Do you know how that happens? thief has entered a house-hold meanwhile if the house-holder somehow, comes to know his presence, the thief decamps instantly. Similarly, if Maya can be recognised, it will disappear forthwith. Please listen to an interesting anecdote of Thakur on this subject. A religious perceptor or a trader in mystic formulae will go to his disciple's home. He has no porter to carry his bundles. While searching hither and thither, he accidentally met a cobbler. The Brahmin asked him "will you carry my bundles?" He replied "respectable sir, I am a cobbler by caste". The Brahmin was in dire necessacity of a porter, accordingly he said "you better accompany me. I shall not disclose this fact to anybody." The cobbler agreed ultimately to his proposal but laid down a condition, stating that "if anybody in case, detect or recognise me then I shall at once, run away". The Brahmin agreed to his terms. Later on, he collected all his bundles and started from his house to reach house of one of his disciples and arrived there. The cobblet sat separately on one side alone meekly out of fear.

One day, one of the inmates of the house of that disciple requested that porter to fetch the water vessel to him to enable to wash his mouth, presuming that the attendant was of high caste. The attendant became very much upset and recoiled out of fear and could not gather sufficient courage to touch that water vessel. The more the porter was hesitating and delaying to carry out the order, his command gradually became louder again and again. When the attendant failed to out his orders to fetch the water-pot, the Brahmin shouted in anger "you rascal! are you a cobbler? Do you not obey the commands of a Brahmin?" Trembling with fear he said "Oh! my Brahmin priest! you have now recognised me-I am depart ing immediately". Saying this he decamped hurriedly. case is the same in this instance. Once Maya is recognised, it will disappear at once. But, there lies a snag. It is the ignorance or individual nescience which lures a human being inlust and gold. As soon as the ignorance ceases to exist, the

kingdom of differentiated nescience or knowledge, begins. There is no limit to such kingdom of knowledge. How far you may travel, there is no boundary of the kingdom of such differentiated knowledge (vidya Maya). I have heard, that one can cross the hedge of Vidya-Maya or differentiated knowledge, in a state of deep emotional trance. That is a distant goal to reach and I have not the slightest conception of that state. I am, now, recognising that everything is the pastime of the Cosmic Energy. Rather, the whole universe is the kingdom of the Supreme Mother Empress. This creation has evolved out of the primordial absolute nature. The three principal Lords i.e that of creation, preservation and destruction are at the command of this fundamental nature. That primeval one Almighty Being, when appears as a Divine Incarnation, he has: to descend through the medium of that primordial nature. Being empowered with her energy, he indulges in sportive play. Again, he disappears through that medium only. I have heard. from the lips of Thakur-

"The endless divine sports of Radha cannot be chanted. Thousands of Krishna and thousands of Rama appear and stay and ultimately disappear".

Thakur used to say that each Divine Incarnation is one-single bubble in the sea of that prime Cosmic Energy. Whatever you are finding, hearing or perceiving or imagining, these all are created in that prime nature and that underlying nature exists inside each of them. She is both the body as well as the embodied soul. She is the instrument as well as the player. She is the chariot as well as the charioteer. She is the Supreme Lord as well as the primordial nature. She is the Lord Shiva as well as the Goddess Durga.

XI

Pathak—Sir, your arguments are much conflicting and my sterious. For example, you said earlier that the universal consciousness is all in all. Now, you are calling that primordial energy is all in all. You are proclaiming that prime energy is Almighty—while keeping that consciousness from which that

energy is derived, in seclusion. One more point, if the prime nature and energy is the contents as well as the substratum and all created objects, then where the Supreme Being has gone?

Devotee—Sri Ramakrishna said this,—so long one does not attain God-consciousness and self-realisation through the mercy of his spiritual guide, till then these subjects on the real nature of Divinity remains obscure and abstruse. Until God consciousness is attained, wild shouting, vosiferous tendencies and frivolties do not cease. But, once God-consciousness and self-realisation is attained, the entire inner world and the true nature of things become clear as the daylight and all doubts are dispelled.

In whatever name that beginningless, infinite and one Supreme Being may be called, there are no separate entities except that one single whole. He has two manifestations—one is Absolute and the other is His sportive play. In the absolute state, to what strange nature does He belong, He only knows—this much can be described about the absolute state and the end is there. But, in the state of his Divine Sport, that one underlying substance has manifested itself in so many objects that he may be called whatever you may like. Besides, there are so many aspects that may be observed, heard and described of Him that if people go on speaking, hearing and seeing about Him perpetually, they cannot end an iota of His description even in successive epochs.

One who is the supreme reality is also the primordial nature. One undivided whole has become apparently dual but both are undifferentiated. For the purpose of Divine Sport or for creation, one whole has become dual, do you know how that happens? It is like a complete grain of gram which when soaked with water divides into two separate half grains. The result is the sprouting of a bud between the two leaves. Exactly in a similer manner, the underlying one Supreme Being when transforms itself into primordial nature, becomes the root cause of creation. In whatever state may the absolute consciousness or Supreme Spirit exist, in the state of Divine Sport or in the matter of creation, it has to take the help of the primordial

energy. As dry soil cannot be moulded into any shape, forwhich water is essentially required to be mixed, likewise in. case of Divine Sport, the Supreme Spirit or Brahman can not function by itself, the help of the primordial energy is essentially required. It is the same substance which is the Supreme Spirit from one point of view and the Cosmic Energy from another point of view. There lies no difference in the underlying substance, but in the state of Divine Sport, He indicates the difference by being perceived in various attributes and conditions. It is exactly like the grinding wheel for preparing flour. What is there in that machine? There are two circular pieces of stones. One is placed above the other. There is one wooden. fulcrum in the middle of the lower piece of stone, while there is one hole in the middle of the upper stone. As the resultant action by putting the fulcrum inside the hole of the upper stone and rotating the two pieces of stones in a circular motion is the production of flour. Exactly in the similar way, when one real' substance is transformed into two distinct entities and made to act, the effect of the inter-action is creation. You may call him either as the Supreme Being, or the Cosmic Nature only or even the Supreme Being and his creative energy. Where the eternal spirit is engaged in the pastime of manifesting in two different manners as the Supreme Being and the creative nature, there the phenomenon is Divine Sport. In that state of Divine Sport, the playful tendency of the cosmic energy is moreconspicuous than that of the Supreme Being. Do you know the example cited by Thakur on this subject? As, there is a head-man in a family who is aged and addicted to smoking thehubble-bubble. During the twentyfour hours, his only activity is smoking and seldom does he speak. If at all he has to speak, he only utters 'yes'. Whatever household duty has to be performed or supervised, that responsibility lies with the grandlady. That lady is an expert house-wife. She knows and does: the work for which arrangements are to be made in the household. She obtains the consent of the old man of the house onlyfor his formal permission. Although, the lady is expert in everymatter, still she does not do any work without asking him.

Moreover, there is no way out but to secure the consent of the head-man. All the detailed accounts of the household work are narrated by her to the old man. On hearing all the details, he acquiesces with a 'yes'. On obtaining the formal consent, the lady returns to her house-hold duties and begins to manage the work-load by issuing various directions to the different people. Those who are engaged in the house or employed for household jobs, or happen to be present there, find the lady only as all in all and understand her to be the sole proprietor. They do not get any indication whether the old man exists in the family or not. In the case of the playground of the Lord, the sportive play of the Cosmic Energy only is perceptible and her supremacy only is felt. In Divine Sport, the whole realm is pervaded by the Empress of Energy and it is her workshop. Out of the two pieces of stones of the grinding mill, the lower one merely exists, while the upper one only operates. Similarly, in the realm of Divine Sport, only the Supreme Being exists, but all the plays are of the Cosmic Energy. So long as the mind works, the individual self exists and that too within her domain. Transcending that state when the mind or the individual self is dissolved or transformed, what is the state or where the exis tence remains, I cannot describe anything about that to you. Pathak—When does he take the role of the Lord of the house and when that of the house-wife?

Devotee—When he is devoid of any attributes, he appears as the Lord of the house. When he is possessed of attributes or qualities, appears as the house-wife. That is the dual state of the same one reality. One who is devoid of any attribute, is at the same time possessed of attributes or forms. No taste can be had of what is devoid of attributes but he can have the taste of the Lord with attributes.

Pathak—Do you accept the theory of adopting a new body by the soul after death i.e. transmigration and re-incarnation?

Devotee—I accept this view fully. Not only do I admit this birth and life after death but also endorse the view that the individual soul carries with it the results of one's actions and natural instincts of this life in the subsequent birth, like the

passage of images of object from one place to another. In order to understand the underlying mystery of the phenomenon, Thakur has narrated an anecdote which please listen to: a king had four sons all of whom were living within the palace and indulging in various sports and pastime there. One day, the four princes as also the sons of the servants gathered together for playing games. The eldest prince told others "brothers! come along-"I am the king". The second prince addressed them "I am the minister". The third similarly addressed others "I am the commander-in-chief". Thereafter, the King sat on a high seat, the minister stood before him with folded hands, the commander collected all the other boys as his soldiers and posed himself as their commander-in-chief. Watching these poses, the youngest son said "brothers! I will not take part in this game". Finding the reaction of the youngest brother to this game, the eldest brother asked him "what type of game do you wish to play then?" Thereon he replied "you better lie on your chest and I shall wash clothings on your back". When the story was completed, Thakur said "this youngest son was a washerman in his previous birth. By dint of good work, he has been born in the royal family but the instinct and nature of the earlier birth was still active in this birth as well".

Have you seen the scented oil? Just take for instance the oil from the flowers called 'Chameli'. The minute grains of the flavour of 'Chameli' when reacted chemically with oil, the scented 'Chameli' oil is produced. In the state of oil, though the body of the flower ceases to exist but the speciality of 'Chameli' is not totally lost, it lingers. The essence of Chameli is its grains of flavour or the wealth of its fragrance. The difference lies in the fact that it was previously in the body of the flower, now it is in the composition of the oil. As the fragrance and property of 'Chameli' flower persist even when converted into oil, exactly in the similar manner though the individual soul transmigrates into a new body, its previous nature and instincts continue in the new body.

Pathak—Which is the root cause of all actions and nature please?

Devotee-It is the desire or will to enjoy luxury or sensual pleasures. Have you heard people saving "one should know. the art of dying, although he may practise spiritual practices and recite repeatedly the name of his ideal deity". The real meaning behind the saying is this—if a person nourishes desire for enjoying pleasures at the time of his death, in that event, he is sure to be born again to fulfil those desires of his. On the other hand, if he remembers the Blessed Lord or repeats his name while dving, he has not to be born again. Continuous repetition of the name of the 'Lord' orally or mentally and concentration of the mind on Him and ceaseless remembrance of His nameis called spiritual aspiration, the end of which is that the name of the Lord and his thoughts might prevail in mind while passing away. I have told you earlier, the mind mingled ignorance and with the help of deluded and misdirected intelligence is constantly vacillating in conviction and doubts keeping in mind the worldly pleasures e.g. how wealth can be accumulated, how respect can be enhanced, how family may be increased, how the home and property can be acquired etc. The action of such imagination does not end even in the sleeping state. When you analyse this matter, you may be able to detect that the wheel of imagination is revolving day and night like the potter's One has to put an end to that sort of fleeting thoughts. This is called renunciation. This can be achieved in two ways. The first and foremost means is to recite the name of the Almighty, to be of service to him, to keep company of the virtuous people and objects, to discuss about the ultimate reality and live occasionally in solitude and pray to him.

Pathak—What wish has to be, expressed in my prayers? How will you dubb your prayer please?

Devotee—You will have to say—Oh Blessed Lord! I have no other support excepting you. Those who are with me or whatever I do possess are all for a temporary period only. You have to pray "grant me devotion, I do not want anything else than devotion and reverence. Through the strength of devotion let my mind constantly rest on your lotus feet".

Pathak—What is the alternative path to renunciation please? Devotee-It is the discrimination between the eternal and the temporary or the discrimination between the real and the unreal. In this respect the advice of Thakur is-you may indulge in the pleasures of minor desires, but drive away the major ones by proper discrimination. In the words of Thakur, transformation of such desires into detachment is called the metamorphosis of the mind. The mind was driving towards Metiaburuz and if diverted towards Dakshineswar, it is called transformation. In order to transform in this way, the mind has to be diverted towards objects different from what are ordinarily sought. The resolution which is deep-seated in the mind has to be converted into an opposite determination. The task in which the mind was engaged, will have to be changed into a different type of work. Let me explain to you, here, one thing, watch! The mind is the root cause of everything. If the mind is diverted, everything will appear favourable. The mind alone is causing the body to dance to the tune of all work, analogous to the monkey of the gypsies. Whatever is being dictated, the bodyis carrying accordingly. You have to dictate the mind saying "brother! do not rush towards that way, do not crave for that particular thing, do not cherish longing for possessing that and do not keep company of these persons. Proceed towards this way, keep on thinking this subject and steady yourself in this way. This controlling is called transformation of the mind. Strong resolution has to be made on the path of detachment and renunciation. Like the path of enjoyment, there is association and work here also. But the type of resolution, association and action, linked to the path of enjoyment is different in nature from that of the path of detachment.

In connection with the mind, I have mentioned that the nature of the mind is that it remains intoxicated completely in one thing. It does not remain peaceful without thinking of mundane objects. As the water is to the fish, so it cannot remain active or alive without worldly objects. But, if you can once divert it somehow or other from the worldly objects to divine topics, it will not easily turn towards the previous ob-

jects. Once the mind is directed towards detachment from the path of desires, it will no longer turn to the path of enjoyment of sense pleasures. Though it may turn once a while to that direction due to past nature of a long period, it will retrace its steps at once and advance towards the path of renunciation with trebled vigour. Outwardly, it will appear that it proceeded to the path of worldly desires once to gather strength only to face the struggle.

Pathak—I could not follow the implication of increasing its power—please clarify in details. When a powerful person becomes weak by treading that path, how can one gain any further strength or power in that path?

Devotee-Have you not ever watched anybody to cross a canal or a big drain? If any one has to cross a broad drain or canal by jumping over it from one side to the other, he has to gather a momentum with a run. Firstly, he goes a few steps backwards, thereafter he starts running from that direction and cross the drain with a big leap. As he has to go backwards to gain stength, the case is the same here also. But, this much is the difference while jumping over the drain, one goes back willingly to gather momentum; in this case, the retracing is unwillingly in ignorance. One can spontaneously realise these things while proceeding through these practices. None realise these truths without going through such practices and circumstances. It is very necessary to go through these practi-'cal work. Attachment for sensual pleasures grow through work and retracing towards detachment will commence through practices only. As desires for sensual pleasures lead to such worldly pleasures, similarly, detachment has to be developed for awakening renunciation. But, it may be admitted that to practise detachment from the path of sensual pleasures, there is a lot of hard work and pains. Do you know how much labour and hardship is involved? Just imagine, I am living at Pathuriaghata in Calcutta; Dakshineswar is six miles north of this place, while Metiaburuz is six miles away towards south. The path to Metiaburuz, as if, the path of sensual pleasures and the way to Dakshineswar is the path of detachment. Having

traversed the path to Metiaburuz, I have reached there. After experiencing the result of the action, I have come to understand now that this place is the source of much restlessness and troubles. On my search for an abode of peace, I came to the conclusion that there is no other alternative but to proceed to Dakshineswar. What am I to do now? I have to come back to Pathuriaghata from Metiaburuz. While on my return journey, I will have to experience the extenuating circumstances in this journey. Here, there is hard labour and endless troubles. Later, when I will start proceeding towards Dakshineswar in the north from Pathuriaghata, peace and tranquility will usher in to some extent. The more I proceed towards this direction, the more peace will prevail in my mind. While going on this path, the thought of Metiaburuz will be reflected repeatedly in my mind due to earlier instincts; but nothing except good will come out of this attempt. As it is very difficult to memorise a different explanation from that already learnt by heart, as it is much aching to adjust the stomach to accommodate a different food by vomiting the eatables already devoured inside, similar hardship has to be endured in proceeding to the path of detachment from that of attachment to sensual pleasures. One more matter is to be considered, whatever troubles may appear while traversing the path of detachment, they drive the traveller forward to his cherished goal only. That amount of labour, trouble and hardship act like the talisman against more severe troubles, hardship and deeper anguish. As no profound knowledge can be acquired about the journey without having experience of being a traveller, so true knowledge in this matter can not be gained unless one sets his foot in the field of work Hence, Thakur used to say, unless one dives deep into the sea of struggle for spiritual practices, he will not be able to gather the precious stones. Go on doing hard work-action is required. If one goes on shouting for intoxication of hemp, he will not feel intoxicated therewith. If he fetches the hemp-leaves, makes them into a paste and drinks it, then only he will feel intoxicated. Practical work is the reality behind detachment and attachment. As one steps into his world of sensual pleasures through his

actions for such worldly desires, similarly, he has to reach the realm of detachment through deeds of renunciation and sacrifice. In both the cases, that practical work is involved. Though work is generally called by this name, but there are various types of work. Hence, the results of such work are also different. Mango, Jack-fruit, Custard apple, Pineapple etc. are fruits, so red and black seed of the shrub is also a fruit. Mango, and Custard-apple are nourishing for health, whereas red and black seed of the shrub is fatal. Similarly, work is of various types and forms. Some work saves one from downfall while other work ruins a person. Work for appeasement of desires only increases the volume of work; following that type of work binds the individual self to inseparable attachment and impregnable bondage. While practice of renunciation leads to gradual decrease of work-load and final liberation from servitude.

Pathak—The practices which you mentioned with the help of which one has to tread the path of detachment are very difficult. In this material world, the attachment to sensual pleasures is very deep. This attachment is not easily removed by any means whatsoever; what is the remedy please?

Devotee—The same story has to be repeated over again. Please go on practising the art of giving up attachments. Though it does not go away by one stroke but there is no denying that it will not disappear gradually. A serious illness is not cured in no time but it is cured in stages with the application of adequate medicines. A malady has developed by taking tamarind when living under a tamarind tree. Now, you will have to go to the grove of 'Neem' trees, take those leaves and stay under the 'Neem' tree for sometime when only you may get cured. You are still living underneath the tamarind tree. No benefit will accrue if you go on shouting repeatedly that the malady has not been cured though you are still living there. You are still living under the tamarind tree and shouting repeatedly "I am not yet cured"; how can any benefit accrue from this?

THE GLORY OF SRI RAMAKRISHNA

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Pathak—Kindly show me what is the easiest path to God-consciousness?

Devotee—Thakur Sri Ramakrishna used to sing a song on this subject. Please listen to this:

"Brother! keep on the blissful mood.

Maintaining this spirit, you will ultimately be successful.

If the two decoit brothers 'Anka' and 'Banka' and that cruel butcher 'Sujan' aspire redemption; and a whore by teaching a parrot to repeat the name of Lord Krishna, in a playful mood attains liberation, as 'Mirabai' attained salvation; cultivate such arduous devotion within your heart, forsaking false pretension and tricks.

Total submission and dedicated service bringforth direct awareness of Lord Rama easily."

Forsaking shrewdness and hypocrisy of worldly attached mind, if you stick to the Blessed Lord, then only you will be able to realise God-consciousness.

Pathak—Unless I can reach him, how shall I stick to him? I am unable to follow it, please explain in detail.

Devotee—So long I have been spending my time with you, talking about the topic of the glory of Sri Ramakrishna. From your conversation, I have now fairly understood that you are fond of a personal God—the image of Lord Krishna. You have a deity of Lord Krishna in your house. Every day you should decorate him with a new dress bedecked with flowers and sandal wood paste. You are people from the theatrical stage, and expert in the art of decoration and make-up. As you complete the make-up of the person acting in the role of Krishna in the play of 'Villa-Mangal', exactly in the same way, adorn the household deity of Lord Krishna. In the summer season, you should fan him with your hand fan, during winter, place a new piece of clothing over his body, lay a comfortable

bed for him, collect whatever attractive things you may find for Lord Krishna, offer the best nourishing food i.e. curdled milk and butter to your deity as food. While offering the food to him cry out petiously saying "Oh Lord, Krishna! thou hast to eat it". Sometimes, you may read the books containing his Divine Sport, while at other times, try to keep company of such saintly persons as have a direct vision of the Lord or have love for Him from the very core of their heart. Keeping yourself engaged in this mission will result in your having a steadfast attachment for Him.

Pathak—Sir, on hearing this clarification, I feel mentally agitated. Where you have advised to address Lord Krishna crying petiously "Oh Lord, you have to take my offering of food", does he actually eat it?

Devotee—He will certainly take the food offered. Please do not entertain any slightest doubt about it. I have seen the Lord to accept the food.

Pathak-What do you say sir? I am thrilled to hear your statement. Moreover, I am having a feeling for crying out. I am a very lowly creature, a foul soul stained with all the misdeeds. Will the Blessed Lord accept the things touched by me? Devotee-Previously, I used to think alike. But, through the grace of Ramakrishna Deva, I have shed all such doubts of mine, all suspicions have been driven from my mind. Please listen. Let me tell you. As you are discovering filthiness within yourself, stain of sin in you, similarly, if you felt a glimpse of the compassion of the Lord, and knew his grace, you would not have uttered those words. The Blessed Lord is a sea of compassion, the abode of kindness. Whatever sinful deeds may I perform, they are nothing compared to that vast sea of kindness. If a pot-full of ink is discharged in the water of a large tank, does the stain of the ink still retain its hue? It fully mixes with the water of the tank and becomes its water. Can a drop of a dew reach upto the Sun-God? The dew evaporates from this world to the next, nowhere. That Blessed Lord, who was born in a prison, willfully entangles himself in obligation with the devotee; who takes and eats the remnants of the meal left over by the shephered boys, holds the foot prints of the Brahmin on his own chest, who is preserving and nourishing the living beings of the universe with his own blood, is that Lord resting only for checking what have you done a bit and where? Fie on you! please do not cast any blame or aspersion on that Supreme Lord who is the sea of kindness.

If ordinary people could get an idea about the limit of His compassion, then no body would have prostrated or bowed down before him or would not have cared or adored Him at all. There is no limit to his kindness, not even any dimension of that. Better compare him to your father. The parents do not care to take into account the fault, however serious it may be of the son. In the case of the Blessed Lord, who is the Supreme Parent of the universe, whose favourite is this world of living beings, such lofty and deep is the effulgence of his love and affection for his creation that if thousands of sea of offences and misdeeds are poured into Him, they will submerge nowwhere in no time and there will be no trace of them any longer

Having some idea of the infinite compassion of our kind hearted Ramakrishna Deva, it was Girish Babu who directed his attention to his feet and said "Alas! had I known earlier that such a wide drain to pour all my sins is available to me, I would have done all the sinful acts to my mind's full satisfaction to fulfil my heart's desires. Since now, I have a chance to see him face to face, there is no way out to do a sinful act.

Pathak—Why sir, after meeting 'Sri Ramakrishna once, can you not do a sinful act again?

Devotee—How is it possible? This is the wonderful effect of seeing the Blessed Lord face to face. As a dry leaf is burnt instantly into ashes when thrown in a conflagration, so all the sinful deeds of hundreds of previous births are annihilated after having a direct vision of the Lord. Along with the destruction of sins, something else also ceases to exist. Do you know what is that? That is the germ of re-birth. A direct vision of God will enable you to escape re-birth. Let me recite a part of the song—please listen to it:

"Victory to the Lord of the universe, "270 de the pulsating life of the world,

I have heard the holy scriptures to a mind and the state that if the moon like face of the Blessed Lord is once seen by an individual self, a large self. The is not to be born again".

After being freed from the sinful deeds, when the heart becomes purified, an individual can no longer engage himself in offensive or wicked acts.

Pathak—If the Blessed Lord is so kind towards the living beings, why does he not free them from these endless miseries when they are suffering so much from maladies, bereavement and other pecuniary difficulties?

Devotee-If you admit yourself the tide water to get into your room by excavating a canal, how can you blame the Lord for the same? Every action has its reaction. Do you admit that the doer has to go through the results of his actions? You are doing the very acts which have been forbidden by Him. He has prohibited you from putting your hands in fire. But you are placing your hands into fire, will these not be burnt? He is earmarking particularly good from the evil and pointing them to you. You are, on your own, not at all treading on the right path-you are keeping company of the wrong doers only. Hence, you are to suffer from sickness, bereavement and want etc. You shall share the possessions of that creature with whom you keep your company. If you keep company of a snake, you are sure to partake some poison. If you keep company of the cow (fulfilling your desires), you will obtain the thickened milk. Woman and wealth are the true embodiment of ignorance like the snake; you are having a constant thought of these things and keeping company of them. Accordingly, what shall you expect to receive except disease, miseries, and sorrows? If you keep constant company and have the thought of the Universal Mother who is the destroyer of all miseries and troubles and resembles the cow fulfilling all desires, you will certainly have the thickened milk of peace and tranquility.

Please listen to this advice-do you know what are all these

great store house of scriptures like the Vedas, Vedantas, Tantras, the mystical formulae, the Gita and the Puranas? These are all the teachings of the Blessed Lord. They are the original sayings from his own holy lips. Amongst these scriptures he has said one very important advice, that is—"oh! worldly souls, perform your work and duties in such a manner as would bring joy and happiness to you. I shall then be happy too".

The Lord has uttered this from his own holy lips but has set up such a tricky machinery in his planned creation that as soon as the individual self would commence to proceed for his own well being or happiness, there will be no hope to be followed by worshipping the Lord or spiritual practices and undergoing severe penance. Therefore, the limited self is impelled to worship and pray to Him constantly and perform spiritual practices. In this creation, there is hardly any hope for peace and joy in any thing except in the Blessed Lord.

But the individual soul is so much confounded, blind and deaf, that he will not proceed towards the Lord who is like the immediate pure gold, leaving sensual pleasures and the base rolled gold. He will not even look at that image, nor listen to His advice. When the living beings become totally beyond control, the sea of kindness incarnates Himself as a human being to bring them under restraint. Inspite of this, do they open their eyes to find out the truth? The Blessed Lord gets restless with the burden of his own compassion. Hence, of his own accord, he moves about from door to door of the individual beings, to bring them under control. Do you know how the wretched souls behave when they find that the Blessed Lord is extremely tenacious in this regard? They laugh away the Lord as a mentally deranged person. Brother! the tongue comes out of the mouth of these fellows on hearing the teachings of the Lord. Now, understand these beings are called individual souls! Look! such is the intelligence of these limited souls! On the other hand, they also are crossing the sky by planes with this intelligence, completing the journey of a couple of years only in three days, transmitting the message from one country to another in five minutes, compelling the five powerful elements of nature to labour at their command like the paid servants, joining a new limb to a maimed person and performing so many hundreds of wonderful things. The whole world is trembling with fear by dint of their intelligence. But, when this intelligence is diverted towards God, that makes a complete somersault. When an oilman's son is engaged with a plough, a cudgel or a sickle, he looks like the 'Bhima' (dreadful) personified. But, when he is pressed for learning the initial alphabets of his mother tongue, his intelligence does not thrive. If it developes in a small measure, it looks like the tow boat of messrs Hore Miller & Co. It does not want at all to move, even if it is sunk. The knowledge of the living beings in respect of God or fundamental Truth is exactly similar.

The individual self cannot recognise where does his betterment lie or wherein exists his own happiness. When he can discover the source of his happiness, only then he tries his best to associate himself with the Lord or have his being in Him, leaving aside all other things of this world. No one can ever find any real happiness in any worldly thing; all the holy scriptures of our religion bear testimony to this fact. Whoever has taken refuge in this material domestic world considering it as the source of happiness, has been duped at the end during his total life time. Do you know what is the nature of this material world? It is like the grinding stone of the pulses. There is a wooden peg in the middle of the stone. That piece of gram of pulse which sticks very close to the peg, cannot be grinded. The rest of the grams can be totally grinded, some may be even powdered. As there is a wooden peg in the grinding stone, similarly the Blessed Lord exists in this material world. As the piece of gram which lies close to the peg is saved from grinding, so also if you can totally rest yourself with the Blessed Lord in this domestic world, you will be saved. If one goes away leaving the peg, the grinding stone will perform its own action. Exactly in the similar way, if one lives in this world forsaking the Lord, three kinds of afflictions and restlessness are inevitable and unavoidable. The Lord has set free the individual beings in this world, after pointing out to

them the presence of both the vat of filth as well as the repository of wealth. If you proceed towards the vat of filth, what can he do? The Blessed Lord is like the wish-yeilding tree, whatever you shall desire he will grant it. When a thief asks for a boon from the Mother Kali after performing his worship, does She deny him her favour? She grants her boom to both to the wicked as well as the truly honest person for their mental prayer. She has tied the fruit of labour along with the work. The thief receives the result of his theft, the virtuous, the fruit of his worship. Now, you can possibly understand that the individual self suffers for his own misdeeds but the Lord is kind, gracious and propitious.

Pathak—They say that the individual soul remains seated in the posture of abstract meditation while in the womb of the mother and controlled and concentrated in mind towards the Blessed Lord. Is this a fact?

Devotee—Neither have I heard myself anything on this subject stemming from the holy lips of Ramakrishna Deva nor whether he has uttered any thing in this regard to any other person. But, so far he has made me to understand, it appears therefrom that this assumption is true. I have also heard it from one of the stanzas of the venerable Vaishnava poems thus:

"Whilst in the womb, human being remains fully absorbed in deep meditation. But as soon as he is born on the earth he swallows the earth's soil".

The sayings of great saints can certainly be trusted. In infancy, the symptoms of a true saint are manifested. Many a times, direct teachings of the Supreme Lord can be heard from the lips of a boy. Thakur Ramakrishna too used to say, in the state of realisation one behaves like a child. Simplicity is highly predominant in a child, like the saint and the devout person. The child is not under the control of the three in-

herent gunas or principles i.e. the qualities of moral excellence, activity and laziness and gloom. Existence of such innate tendency of nature i.e. simplicity etc. in a child indicates his existence in a state of meditation within the mother's womb.

Pathak—Let these discussions be dropped for the time being. You have raised some good points which are very dear to my heart. I truly do love Lord Krishna and very fond of feeding him. In my inner mind, I know Krishna is charming. If I can reach him, I shall fulfil my heart's desires with him in various ways. Can you indicate how I may realise and reach him? You people proclaim that Sri Ramakrishna is the Blessed Lord, so also is Sri Krishna. But, I have a special liking for the form and image of Krishna in preference to that of Sri Ramakrishna. Possibly, you may not at all like my saying so, because you are charmed with the appearance of Sri Ramakrishna. You have taken him to be the Almighty and are going on propagating his Divine Sport all the time and keeping yourself engaged in cele brations and worship of him only.

Devotee-Shame! Shame! how dare you say that praises to Lord Krishna, the image and form of Krishna and his devotees are not to our liking. You are fully devoted to Lord Krishna and love him dearly; it is a matter of utmost concern and care for me. Since you are dedicated to the love of Lord Krishna, you have succeeded to see Sri Ramakrishna face to face. Lord Krishna himself is Sri Ramakrishna. The difference on this occasion lies in the fact that the type of his sport is obscure, besides he has changed his form completely. But, you may take it for granted that in case he is revealing himself or pointing out the objects clearly, those particular souls can understand the matter. The same milk sometimes appears as butter, sometimes as curd, sometimes as the thickened milk and at other times as cream or ghee. Whether it is curd, butter of ghee, it is the divergent state of the same milk only. The difference lies in its taste and form. Exactly, in the similar manner, in whatever appearance or state may the Lord appear, the same Absolute Spirit exists within him. Sri Ramakrishna is the oversoul and resides within the heart of every individual being. In whatever form or path one has meditated on the Lord once with a sincere mind, he would have to come and appear before Ramakrishna Deva. Sri Ramakrishna too, has repeatedly uttered in a state of emotional ectasy that one who has meditated on him once with a simple mind, would have to approach him.

XIII

Pathak—By attracting towards his own self a person who is fond of an appearance or figure different from him, what does Sri Ramakrishna do?

Devotee-In the first instance, he will be told of the desired form of the deity of that devout person, the attributes of his ideal and his Divine Sport both openly and in secrecy to that devotee. Do you know what is the effect of this action? It increases to a greater extent the earnestness of that devotee in the desired appearance of his ideal deity. Thereafter, when Thakur finds out that his longing for the Lord has considerably increased, by that time he accompanies the devotee to his desired spot, reveals to him his desired figure and form by taking the devotee along with him. While on his way, he will never allow the devotee to recognise that the desired form and appear ance is the alternative appearance of Ramakrishna Deva himself. Do you know why does he indulge in such a sport? Sri Ramakrishna never spoils one's own natural aspiration. One wholoves Lord Krishna is told of the teachings of Krishna only. The delicacy and sweetness of the Divine Sport of Krishna, are described and displayed to him and devotional songs about Krishna only are sung. One who loves the form of Mother Kali, is informed of the grandeur of the Mother only and devotional songs about the cult of Shakti are sung.

He usually takes on the philosophy of Vedanta to one who is the follower of the formless Absolute. To the followers of personal God, he speaks of His various forms and appearances, and to those who are the followers of the attributeless Supreme Spirit, he talks to them accordingly. The attitude of Ramakrishna Deva is—it will be enough if one truly.

loves God in whatever form or manner he pleases. In whatever form, through whatever path or nature one travels, reach the same fixed goal. The followers of all faithswhether he be a devotee of personal God, a Vedantist, a follower of the path of Yoga (transcendental meditation), a Mahommedan mendicant or a Christian, used to congregate near him because of the pleasing, catholic, universal, humane appeal of his religion. As this resourceful earth carries within its bowel all the nourishing ingredients of the trees, plants and shrubs, producing beautiful flowers and fruits, exactly in the same way, nourishing juice flows from the attractive body of Ramakrishna Deva, nurturing energy to the followers of all faiths and paths. Hence, Sri Ramakrishna has been called the arbitrator of all controversies, the Supreme preceptor. One who has taken refuge in Ramakrishna Deva has attained fulfilment of his wishes and revelation of his ideal. One who is desirious of having a direct vision of a different form of his ideal, and accompanies Sri Ramakrishna on the path laid down by him, cannot, at that time, recognise or understand him fully. Later on, when his wishes are fulfilled through the grace of Sri Ramakrishna, then only he is able to realise and recognise him.

Pathak—What does he understand and how far he realises please?

Devotee-He understands and discovers this much, that to whom Sri Ramakrishna has directed and escorted, is the same underlying reality as Sri Ramakrishna himself but there, of course, lies a difference in form, ideas and taste. The difference in taste means, there is variance in the realisation. Do you know what does it resemble? In some place, there will be an experience of the existance of the Blessed Lord. At another place, there will not be any such feeling of the Lord. It is like your feeling of friendship (sakhya) with Lord Krishna. Will you bow down to Lord Krishna after coming within his easy reach. or sit down at his feet with folded hands? You will behave with him just as you do with your intimate friend-you will sit and dine with him together etc. and behave exactly like that. But, in the case of Sri Ramakrishna, the feeling of a religious

guide or the feeling of the Blessed Lord will predominate. Though you will realise that both are the same, yet the difference in form, appearance and thought will still persist.

Pathak—Does the same underlying reality pervade in all the appearances—the same Blessed Lord? The various forms and images of Mother Kali, Lord Krishna, Lord Rama, Lord Siva, Sita and Radha etc. are of the same one Blessed Lord? Does the same reality also exist in the formless Supreme Spirit as exists in the personal God?

Devotee-What else exists therein?

Pathak—If that be so, how then is the same one Blessed Lord is always present in all the various forms and appearances to satisfy the intense longings of the different devotees in diverse ways? Just imagine that in our theatre each player has to act in the roles of two or three characters. In order to demonstrate, one has to put on the dress of a king for a particular role. In another, he has to put on the clothings of a city police, while in another role, he has to make up the dress of a convict but in case, if in the same one scene, the presence of the three characters i.e. the king, the city police and the convict is simultaneously required, then will it be possible to act in the three roles by one and the same person? One may appear more than once in different dresses and appearances at different times but simultaneously can never exhibit the different roles at a time except one single role.

Devotee—I have now followed your argument. If one whole Blessed Lord is unable to exist simultaneously in various forms and figures at all places at all times, then how can He be called the Supreme Lord? Do you know, what is the real meaning of the epithet "Infinite or Eternal" of the Blessed Lord? He is infinite not in one form but in innumerable forms and appearances. Everything is possible with the Blessed Lord. Who except the Lord himself has ever realised or known or possibly know what is the Supreme Lord? You are mentioning about a few forms or appearances of the Lord but I have heard

from Sri Ramakrishna about the endless forms from each appearance of the Lord.

One day, in order to give out the idea of the Infinite to the devotees. Sri Ramakrishna said, "to reach the Blessed Lord, hundreds of Ramas and hundreds of bunches of Krishnas are hanging around on both sides of the path. In each bunch of Krishnas, there are so many number of Krishnas, similarly in each bunch of Ramas, there exist so many Ramas that they are beyond counting. Then again, those bunches are also infinite in counting. One of the Krishnas of that bunch incarnated in Vrindaban for his Divine Sport. One of the the Ramas of the bunch was born in Ayodhaya. Though the appearance is countless in variety but the same Absolute Spirit dwells in them. As the Blessed Lord is infinite in one form, so he is infinite in countless forms also. As we are small individual beings, our frame is likewise small. How can I conceive the idea of that Infinite? Hence, Sri Ramakrishna used to sav "how can five seers of milk be accommodated in a small jar of one seer?"

To sum up at the end, one who exists in a personal God is also existing as formless. One whose existence is perceived in a particular form, also exists in a formless condition. He is both formless and with form. Apart from these, whatever exist, in this creation, he dwells in them also. Nothing else exists excepting that one integrated whole being. Therefore, whatever you heard about variety of forms, whatever various appearances you have seen, they are all his expressions. He pervades in all of them. One who is the container is also the contained. One who is understood as dual is also non-dual. But duality and non-duality are the sport of that one Absolute.

That fortunate individual being who is truly dualist, is alone really non-dualist. There is no difference between a true dualist and a true non-dualist. One who has found out the sportive play of that undivided Absolute Spirit in this infinite universe, has truly realised the knowledge of non-dualism. The conception of unity in diversity is called the knowledge of the One. On accquiring this knowledge, the individual self realises the Absolute Spirit; in other words, he attains the Summum-

Bonum, that is why Sri Ramakrishna used to say "you may do whatever you like after acquiring the true knowledge of the One". The dictum 'whatever you may do' means an individual soul with such true knowledge of the One, cannot act in a debased manner. In other words, whatever he does is good because he can, on no account, put on a false step in the wrong direction.

The sport of the Blessed Lord is bewildering. That sport is also without any limit. How long may you watch his game, it will gradually appear to you as infinite. The more you submerge deep into an ocean, the vastness of it, will as if, appear to increase correspondingly. Similarly, the more you watch the sport of the Lord, the sphere of the sport increases correspondingly. His sport is as infinite in variety, so also in appearance. The idea of the infinite cannot be conceived by human mind. One who can have the faintest concept of the minutest of the minute particle of that infinite i.e. the idea of the smallest particle of that grandest and magnificient reality, becomes mute and overwhelmed with emotion after uttering at most, the first letter of the word 'infinite'. Do you know-how this state of being lost in one's ecstasy happens? It is like the particular person becoming completely drunk and devoid of senses of the outside world by taking one bottle of wine only from amongst the numerous drums of wine stacked in a wine shop. Similarly, with the perception of a tinge of the infinite, one gets lost in himself.

Pathak—Many persons raise objections to the theory of Incarnation of God or personal God on the ground that one who is infinite and indivisible, can never be finite and limited. Hence, the theory of Incarnation of Divinity or superimposing of a particular image of that infinite indivisible being is delusory.

Devotee—One who advances such an argument is not at all familiar with the idea of the infinite in his mind. He has not in the least, realised the meaning of the infinite. He ascribes the Blessed Lord with the attribute of infinite with his lips and not with the core of his heart. According to me, one who is infinite is immeasurable in all appearances and states. He is un-

limited in form, appearance, idea, taste, smell, sound and touch. He is both finite as well as infinite. One who is infinite, preserves his property of infinity in all states even when he is transformed to whatever specified form or limited appearance. He is as infinite in his unbounded state, so also in his divided and limited The water of the Ganges is an illustration in point. Whatever purifying quality is inherent in the vast sheet of water flowing right from the Himalayas to the Bay of Bengal through the Ganges, it also exists in a single drop of water from wherever part of the river is collected. Even when the Lord becomes limited in appearance, his unlimitedness, indivisibility and omnipotence are not impaired in any way. That universal Mother who dwells in the world also lives in the minutest uarticles of matter. She is the same, both in the universal state and also in the minute state. Sometimes, the playful mother is devoid of any dress or outer garment. At other times, she is with her full dress. She alone exists is reality in all appearances and circumstances. Whatever dress you put on in acting your role, your individuality remains the same in all the appearances and stages. These facts are to be realised or directly experienced by a saint or devotee. Those are not the sermons of text books or subjects of abstruse arguments.

The statement that one who is undivided and infinite cannot become finite and divided, contradicts directly the quality of His being unlimited. If the infinite does not possess the power of becoming finite, what is then the efficacy of His unlimitedness? If it is said that He is only infinite and not otherwise, then it amounts to putting a limit to His limitlessness. By worshipping and praying to a personal God, the devotees do not limit the Blessed Lord. The saint Ramaprosad sings in one of his songs thus:

(a) "Ramaprosad says, Oh mind, shall I disclose in public (Chatar) the true nature of Her.

⁽a) From Page 277 of Complete Works of Swami Abhedananda, Vol. V, Centenary Edition.

whom I worship as my Divine Mother? Guess and understand it from these hints". Another of his songs runs as follows:—

(b) Oh! who knows how Kali looks,
 Who is beyond the ken of six philosophies (1)?
 Kali (2) sports with Siva (3) in the lotus-forest (4).
 The yogi meditates on Her always in muladhara (5) and sahasrara (6).

As the swans, male and female, commune with each other.

So in this lotus forest does Kali commune with her consort Siva).

Kali is the Self of him who delights in the Self (7): As beloved as Sita is of Rama.

She dwells in each being reigning at Her free will. She gives birth to the universe which is her belly; conceive how vast She is.

And this my mind perceives but heart knows not, yet being small like a dwarf, it still aspires to catch at the moon".

Note—[1] Nyaya, Vaisesika, Samkhaya, Yoga, Mimamsa and Vedanta. 2) Divine Will (Sakti). 3) Absolute.
4) Susumna within the spinal cord, which contains the six centres of esoteric consciousness (Chakra).
5) The lowest chakra at the bottom of the Susumna.
6) The highest chakra above the cerebrum in the middle. 7) Atmarama has conquered egoism and all desires and delights in the self only].

Another of his songs runs as under: -

(c) "Look here! all these are the Woman's play; (1) She plays a secret (2) play for Herself.

⁽b) Partly from Page 9 of "The Cult of Shakti", Ramaprosad's Devotional Songs by Jadunath Sinha. (First Edition).

⁽c) From Page 16 of "The Cult of Shakti", Ramaprosad's Devotional Songs by Jadunath Sinha. (First Edition).

She creates a conflict between qualified God (3) and Unqualified Brahman (4), and breaks a stone with a stone (5).

The woman is ready to give all other boons (6), but loth to grant the most coveted boon(7).

Ramaprosad Says, "Set afloat the raft on the ocean of the (Samsara) world and wait;

The same Mother Kali who was seen directly by Rama-prosad as of definite measure and of human stature, was also realised by him as an embodiment of Brahman. That universally adored Vyasa, the writer of the holy Puranas was also the author of Vedanta. Shanker and Ramanuja were the commentators of the Vedanta composed by Vyasa. An individual cannot have any conception at all about the writings compiled by Vyasa without Lord's grace which is attained, through ceaseless prayer and spiritual practice through several births.

Before expressing one's opinion about the identity of a person, one has to get oneself acquainted with the detailed knowledge about that person; similiarly, before preaching of the divine truth amongst the general public, God-conciousness, has to be attained; when individuals realise God-conciousness, some of them cannot even speak or become silent, others spend the rest of their lives with talks and discussions about truth and divinity. Without God-consciousness and direct vision of the Blessed Lord and His direction, none can become eligible to express any opinion about the Supreme Being. Those who oppose the path of worship of the personal God, neither under-

go any spiritual practice nor follow any creed. One who truly worships any ideal and follows any creed, cannot speak ill of any follower of any faith. Because, he fully knows and realises that every body is worshipping the same Lord in different ways. appearances and forms. Secondly, one who is absorbed in true prayer and worship, remains wholly engrossed in his own thoughts and does not find any time to digress his attention towards extraneous matter. As all the roarings are on the shores of the sea but there is no sound, once the depth of the sea is entered into. Similarly, all the up-roar is on the outward path leading to Godliness; but once you enter deep inside the divine thought, the confusion and the noise cease. According to Thakur Ramakrishna, it is an act of total ignorance to deny or refute the idea or the worship of personal God. In order to settle the diverse disputes amongst the various sects of the followers of the Supreme Being, Thakur Ramakrishna has incarnated in this world. This is written in bold letters in every line of his teachings and every word of his Divine Sport.

It is useless to refute the doctrine of personal God by shrewd argument and abstruse reasoning; the alternative name of this shrewd knowledge is deep suspicion. It is better for the simple folk to take refuge at the feet of his spiritual guide if they happen to harbour such doubts. Absolute trust in the teachings of the spiritual guide is equivalent to the axe (antidote) of the poison tree of suspicion. The devout followers who are dedicated to the sublime feet of their spiritual guide and have fulfilled their heart's longing, call this suspicion natural worldly disease. Others again point out that this doubt is the deepest ignorance which obscures the Lord from the sight of the individuals. That habit of suspicion soils the heart's mirror wherein the image of the blessed Lord is reflected. Through the grace and association of a true spiritual preceptor or guide, the inertness or ignorance disappears like the vanishing darkness with the appearance of the rising sun. I have directly felt this experience with the close association of Thakur Ramakrishna.

Several erudite scholars of world-wide reputation from inside the country and abroad, vastly learned in the various holy scriptures used to pay a visit to Sri Ramakrishna from time to time. Being overwhelmed with vanity of their learning, initially they began to discuss and argue about the existence of the Blessed Lord in such a verbose style and corner him in a flabbergasted position that he lost his wit to find a way out of that situation. Common people used to think that Thakur had been won over by these scholars. At that juncture, do you know what steps were taken by Thakur? He used to utter "I shall go for a nature's call". Once, he uttered those words, nothing could prevent him in doing such action. As soon as the words were uttered, he used to get up. The devotees knew the tactics of Thakur. Finding Thakur to get up, one of them used to start following him with a jug of water.

Pathak—How is that Thakur was defeated in the arguments? Devotee—Why are you so hasty in your inference? Please listen to the whole story first. There are manifold reasons for Thakur's submission. The desire of the arrogant scholars was, winning a debate and this was the sole object of their learning. They have come to Thakur hearing his wide fame with that particular mission in their minds. Thakur is just like the wish-yielding tree. He fulfils the desires which are harboured by the individual persons. I have not heard of the name of any other more charitable person than Thakur who bestows honour to persons who do not deserve any respect.

Thereafter, while on his way, Thakur became overwhelmed with emotional trance. He was putting his foot steps just like a drunkard, uttered something meanwhile in a low voice from his sublime lips. Some times, they were intelligible, at other times, not. In this way, once he sat at the fixed place to answer nature's call and returned hurriedly. Thereafter, he once touched that person who was having his arguments and accosted him "now please tell me what was the subject you were talking about?" That simple touch was an immense blessing of that gracious Lord. By the mere touch of our Lord, those argumentative scholars were transformed into a peculiar condition.

Do you know what was that condition? The condition of those scholarly people turned such as becomes the condition of a hooded snake when it is caught by an expert snake charmer with the help of a stick in his hand. The state of those learned persons did no longer turn offensive. They did not make any further noise by quoting long verses. As if, that hooded serpent is now sleeping in the basket. For sometime, they fixed their gaze with winkless eyes towards Thakur. Immediately after that, some would sit on their knees with folded hands and begin to chant hymns about him and sing all praises for him. Some other cried shouting "Oh! Lord, rouse our consciousness". While some one else used to roll at his feet and moisten the soil with the drops of tears from their eyes.

In this connection, I may say a word. The point at issue is that every subject has a picture. What incident you have just now heard, please draw up a picture in your mind shutting the eyes. If you are able to draw this picture, you will at once realise, how within a twinkle of an eye the shadow of darkness of that immensely hostile and formidable ignorance would vanish through the mercy of Thakur. Not to speak of what cannot be achieved by the limited self through austere penance and religious practices in several births, more creditable objective could also be achieved by the mere sight and touch of our Lord. There is no limit to the compassion of Thakur. Due only to the darkness of scepticism those learned persons, a little while ago, could raise their heads on account of their scholastic egotism. But by the mere touch of our Lord, those heads were levelled to the dust. This means, the truth which remained obscure before the eyes of those debaters in the course of their argument, was revealed to them as distinct objects in broad day light by the mere power of touch of Thakur. The kindness incarnate, the tree fulfilling our wishes-the Blessed Lord imparted the power of realising the underlying truth by dispelling their ignorance and rousing their consciousness.

One more fact—this scepticism is leading all the people of this world of struggle to go round and round like the bull with blindfold eyes of an oil machine. This darkness may also

be dispelled through the path of spiritual practices and ceaseless meditation but that too is the result of severe austere prayers and penance of several births. On the other hand, behold the greatness of Sri Ramakrishna. Do you understand, how much is the difference between the removal of ignorance through the path of spiritual practices and through the grace of our Lord? It is equivalent to visiting Vrindaban on foot by begging all the way and travelling by rail with a proper ticket attended with abundance of food stuff. The second illustration is—drinking of water by digging a well vis-a-vis from a transparent tank. Can an individual soul visualize what material is he made of, whose mere touch awakens one's consciousness. Brother! proclaim once by shouting from the core of your heart, victory to Sri Ramakrishna. Though the individual being has studied the holy scriptures, yet he is slightly higher than an animal without spiritual consciousness. There lies no difference between implanting consciousness in an ignorant person and infusion of life in a piece of stone. The Blessed Lord in the form of Rama, infused life to one stone and turned it into a lady. This time, in the incarnation of Ramakrishna, the Lord has manifested His immense glory by imparting consciousness to hundreds of stonyhearted people through his unlimited grace. When consciousness is aroused, what transformation of state takes place in an individual cannot be orally described. Hence, I have been repeatedly saying to you that the Divine Sport of Ramakrishna cannot be described, not even to be listened to but to be observed only.

XIV

Pathak—Please describe as far as possible—what does take place when consciousness is aroused in an individual being?

Devotee—To regain true consciousness and compassion of the Supreme Goddess amounts to the same result. Just imagine! when a simple village folk who has never visited a theatre, asks you "what is shown in a theatre—what interesting things are there please". What reply will you give to him or explain things happening there? Similar is the case here also. This creation

is the theatrical stage of our Mother. There is another world inside the visible world. This visible world is called the outer world. The world which is inside this world is called the inner world. The world outside is the index of the inner world. The Supreme Mother is playful; the type of game played by Her within these two worlds is called Her playful fun. As a ticket or a free pass is the passport for entering inside a theatrical hall, similarly, the Mother's compassion or arounsing of consciousness is the only secret lane to enter the inner world from the outer one. When consciousness is once aroused, this outer world will be viewed from a different angle of vision. Though the outer world from the unconscious (ignorant) plane is identical with that from the conscious plane, yet in the conscious state you will observe that its former nature, appearance and colour etc. have been completely transformed. In the conscious state, the vision is not with the eyes remaining open but with the closed eyes. This is perceplible with equal intensity in light as also in darkness. In this state, both these physical eyes are mere eyes by name—a different eye is necessary to see inwardly. One can see fascinating funs with that eye. Let me narrate to you one or two of the incidents of those wonderful funs. You are only a human being full of bones and skin, measuring the usual three and half of your cubits. You are only aware that this body is the "I", or the soul. But that is not the fact. You are different from the body-in other words, you and your body are entirely different. There is a mind-stuff inside this body. That mind is constantly indulging in resolution and scepticism throughout the day and night. That one mind, sometimes becomes divided into duality and quarral with each other. On the other hand, to settle the dispute, some one else appears on the scene. Intelligence, egoism. individual soul, the eternal spirit, the six senses of passion i.e. sensual instincts, anger etc. are all active within this body. All these facts have been explained to you much earlier. All these wonderful funs are constantly in this body and indulging in various games but the human beings are not aware of these at all.

In this connection, it may be said that there are so many

other indescribable things inside this body. Are you aware a bit of them or do you observe their activities? As a puppet showman makes the dolls to dance through his various tricks, similarly, the Mother who is full of fun, is forcing all the embodied souls to play according to Her wishes with all the various ingredients within this body. She indulges in all Her various sports of this creation through those living beings. The fun of it is that through Her sportive play, she does not leave any scope for the living beings to come to know anything about these games. But a particular soul on whom she becomes compassionate, and arouses consciousness, is able to perceive all these sportive plays.

What a fantastic fun! In this creation, there are so many individual 'I's in each body and every being is propagating at the top of his voice his own egotism. But, in reality, there do not exist so many hundred thousands of 'I'. What actually exists in place of 'I's, cannot be realised without the compassion of the Divine Mother.

People say, they have so many persons fully acquainted to them. In other words, they know them quite well. But, in reality they do neither know anybody, nor recognise any one of them. Even they do not really know their mother, wife, son and the family members. A man does not even know himself. What is he, wherefrom did he come, where does he exist, whereto will he go ultimately what will he do—all these he does not even know at all. Without the consciouness being aroused through the mercy of that playful Mother, there is no way out to know or realise anything in this world.

Whatever numerous diverse varieties of appearance, taste, smell, touch and sound you are observing in this world, all of them have been produced from the same preparation of a single variety of sweetmeat. Amongst them, no one is high or low, good or bad, best or worst. Whatever exists in this macrocosm also exists in each microcosm. There is no total destruction except transformation in quality or appearance. All these facts cannot be perceived by anyone except by the realised soul.

Now, you may realise what is consciousness. This consciousness rarely perceptible even by the gods, was roused in the heart of the individual soul with the slightest compassionate look of Sri Ramakrishna. Consciousness alone is the sailboat to cross the sea of this phenomenal world and in this matter, it is Sri Ramakrishna who is the only guide.

In order to reveal the significance of his unlimited compassion and infinite power to the individuals, Thakur used to utter sometimes in a state of emotional trance, "one does not have to cry aloud for long when a venomous snake bites-he may, at most, shout for once, twice or thrice". Do you know what is the real meaning of this utterance? There is deadly poison inside the mouth of some snakes—they are called venomous snake-e.g. Cobra, the monstrous serpent etc., while there are other species which have no venom-e.g. a few species of non-venomous snake etc. If those who have no poison or venom catch frog-it will have to croak for quite a long time. But, if a venomous snake catches a toad, it cannot croak for long, because it is overpowered easily due to the influence of the venom. Citing this illustration, Thakur used to reveal the identity of his sublime self and say "I belong to such a class that one has not to argue on whom I shall lay my hand. He will reach his desired goal quickly".

Again he sometimes used to tell that if a bright green insect catches a cockroach, the hue of that cockroach turns exactly into that of the bright green insect. This means—whom I (Thakur) shall catch hold of, his nature will become like that of mine, He told Girish Babu "better enjoy yourself for the present by eating and drinking as you like—because it may not be possible later on".

Before paying a visit to Thakur, several of his rich, respectable and socially distinguished devotees merely heard his name and said "we have seen so many great ascetics during these years of our life. If we do go there at all, we shall teach him a lesson by rubbing his nose." Some others proclaimed "We will compel him to stop his sermons by making a fool of him

with a few of our arguments." Girish babu too, at this first sight, said "We have seen enough of bluffing in this nineteenth century, but what an enchanting power our Lord possesses! By the mere sight for once or twice of his Supreme joyful appearance and child like simplicity, his proud devotees prostrated at his subline feet for life. Their previous reasonings. arguments, sensitivity, and intelligence etc. sank somewhere beneath the sea of Sri Ramakrishna; they were unable to trace their identity any longer. Thakur is gifted with such a grace that there is no escape from him, once a person sees him. None has ever witnessed such an incarnation of loveliness and beauty of the formless Supreme Spirit. Not only the fascinating influence rested in his lovely appearance but also the same attractive influence was inherent in his qualities. His beautiful and carved eyes were elongated upto the base of his ears. They had such an attractive force that one was not spared from his clutches, once his gaze was fixed on him.

"Once the arrow of inevitable gaze pierces a soul, he cannot escape from the mind like a bird. He kills with the arrow of his will-force but rejuvinates with his benign gaze, I cannot paint the full picture of the compassionate looks of his carved eyes".

His broad forehead, both lips beautifully carved and slightly redish in colour, the face reeling around with a trace of smile, like the transparent water of the river Kalindi when undulated by the gentle breeze, as if it is brightened by the serene moonlight, his neck properly measured, voice like the music of the flute, wide and large chest, both the arms elongated upto the knees, the two graceful legs, the plan of the feet softer than oranges, his mere touch transformed an iron body into a golden one. His radiant sublime body was full of all the attributes and qualities. Amongst such qualities as if compassion was overflowing incessantly. His grace was distributed very generously. His showing of compassion and affection was like a mountain in place of a molehill, whereby the spectators were overwhelmed by it. Hence, none got any opportunity of

estimating what else abounded in that sublime frame. In this case, the Divine Sport is very deep seated whose bottom cannot be fathomed. There is not the slightest trace or external pompand grandeur. But, thousands of universe get submerged in that inner majesty whose limit was unknown. For this reason, the Divine Sport of Sri Ramakrishna cannot be verbally described. This sport has not to be merely heard but one has to witness it with one's own eyes only. What is observed cannot be described in words. As Thakur is a Divine Incarnation in a concealed form, so is his sport. What an amazing sport! Being visible in a most impressive way he is simultaneuosly deeply concealed. It is very difficult to understand too simple a soul. As there lies a most intricate feeling and idea in the simplest of a proposition, exactly in a similar way, there exists the idea of a concealed Incarnation inside the manifasted Incarnation of Divinity. Unless direct awareness of the subject is achieved, it is hardly possible to conceive the inter-play of conflicting tendencies there.

Pathak—Sir, you are perfectly right. These discussions are very pleasing to the ear but cannot be properly followed. What is the difference between the external and internal grandeur please? What is concealed being manifested, intricate or abstruse being simple?

Devotee—The significance of the Divine Sport of the Blessed Lord cannot be described in such great detail. It has to be understood from the hints and implications. An idea may be conveyed by the eyes, nose and gesture of the face very clearly but the speeches cannot reach so far. I have been telling you all along that I am an illiterate person, have no proficiency in language, nor have I studied the holy scriptures, nor travelled far on a pilgrimage, nor have undergone spiritual practices. Whetever strength, intelligence, support and resources I do possess, they are Sri Ramakrishna all together. In whatever manner he is revealing to me and making me realise. I am simply repeating them to you to the best of my ability. Do you know what is called the external power? It is that superhuman power through which a cruel heart became humane, a

wooden boat turned into a golden one, the awesome gaint bow of Lord Siva was broken into two at the hands of a boy, the dreadful female demon 'Taraka' was killed, the heavier stone remained suspended in water, a mountain was held up by the little finger of the hand, the female monster lost her life by the sucking baby, the water of the river Jamuna started flowing up stream with the music of the flute. Lord Krishna transformed into Mother Kali before the very eyes, the puzzle of four or five faces cropped up, some one got wild over trifles, the three worlds were covered by the three dwarf feet, the weight of the earth was balanced by the teeth etc. All these acts are the mysteries of external power. These riddles. though fall within the purview of the Divine Sport of Sri Ramakrishna, still are not really his ideals and objects. this case, the sport is of purity and excellence. Through this power, the externally dormant and sleeping serpent of the heart awakens instantly, the gate of the amazing theatre gets opened. aversion to worldly objects of lasting attachment begins, those who are kith and kin become unfamiliar, and close associates turn strangers. The course and complexion of the mind is transformed, the cycle of endless births is instantly hausted, the sense organs find new avenues, the world becomes regenerated and fresh, the body and soul become separate, the marrows and the bones move about freely, the ideals of the Vedas and the Puranas dawn in the mind automatically, the infinite variety of objects of the universe turn into one undivided whole, while the one whole (unity) transforms into endless forms, colours, smell, tastes, sounds, the good and evil sleep in the same bed and that Blessed Lord whose doorstep hesitatingly avoided in entering by Lord Varuna, the Moon, the Wind and Yama becomes closer and familier to your self than your own soul. All these are within the purview of the sport of Sri Ramakrishna. The results of external power can be perceived by the sense organs: hence they can be verbally described; but those of the inner power though within the orbit of the sense organs, yet cannot be perceived through them. Accordingly, I have been repeatedly telling you that the Divine Sport of Sri Ramakrishna cannot be

properly described but can only be observed. Can anybody who has comprehended the Divine Sport of Sri Ramakrishna bit by bit, utter anything through his lips? He takes it for granted that his is an amazing sport which can neither be described nor explained in details to any one.

Secondly, though Sri Ramakrishna revealed himself but at the same time remained concealed; he was too simple and candid but at the same time he was complicated. Please listen with a patient attention what really was that. The birth place of Sri Ramakrishna is such an unimportant place that there does not appear to be any reason why it shall be widely known to the public before his birth. The place where his father's residence existed, in other words, that extremely venerated house where the Lord was born, was situated within a locality of the respectable people. That place was at the far end of the village, the inhabitants were weavers, farmers and suppliers of firewood for dead-bodies-whom the caste Hindus call low caste people. The burning ghat was nearby, the marshy land was full of shrubs and trees of different varieties; vultures, dogs, and jackals who were fond of dead bodies were abounding in plenty. A canal was situated nearby and none dared to go there alone after dusk. His father was not at all a wealthy person, his only property was seven kottahs of land. He was extremely poor but you must know that he was not a mean person. Within his household compound, there was only one living room; due to poverty the interior was made of bamboo instead of log or wood. There were one room for the family deity. one for cooking and a shed where the husking pedal was fixed. For want of room, our Lord was born in the shed of the husking pedal. After his birth, one poor young widow of a blacksmith family reared him affectionately. Though there were habitation of rich people nearby, but their family too was very large and they too had a large number of children. When Sri Ramakrishna grew up a little, instead of mixing with them, he began to mix up with those of humble and poor working class people. He used to keep company with them all the time, play and tend cows with them. There was no tendency at all to learn reading and writing. In his grown up age, though he went to the

primary school at the insistence of the guardians, but he paid very little attention to learning. After a strenuous effort, he learnt up to the very primary table of mathametics. He learnt a few vernacular alphabets and learnt to write the names of gods on the palm leaves. The process of learning ended there. At the ripe age of a grown up boy and the beginning of his adolescent period, he was engaged in the priestly duties of the temple complex. That temple area belonged to a fisherman family. No high caste Hindu used to take his meal consecrated to the temple deity publicly. The owner of that temple complex was the well known Landlady named Rani Rashmoni. There was abundant arrangements for consecrating cooked food and other daily offerings to the deities of Mother Bhabatarini and Lord Krishna in the temples built by her and dedicated to the above deities. People say, due to want of suitable recipients, consecrated food etc. had to be thrown to the Ganges. Because, the consecrated food belonged to the established by a fisherman family, the high caste respectable people did not take it. Sri Ramakrishna was appointed as the priest of this temple yard. He could not maintain the established rites and rituals of worship and service of the deity followed by other priests. He used to worship and perform the daily service of the deities and decorate their garments in a state of joy and ecstasy. The nature of Sri Ramakrishna was just the opposite of that of the common people. Therefore, he was taken for granted by the rightful followers of established rituals and ceremonies, as a mad man. Thereafter, his elder brother Ramkumar took Thakur along with him to his native village and put him in a wed-lock. The father of the bride with whom he was married, was a priest engaged in daily worship of the deities with elaborate rituals. He was extremely poor and spent his days miserably with a family of five or six dependents. According to the prevalent custom, Thakur had to offer a dowry in his marriage, that too was not a very little sum, in all three hundred rupees. The nature of Thakur was exactly like that of a child. There was no scent of the three qualities-Sattwa. Rajas and Tamas (purity, action and indolence). He did neither distinguish between self and others, nor cared at all for any

existing relationship. He paid no attention at all to women and wealth. Where there was any connection with lust and gold, he poured his hatred bitterly. Over and above this, there was occasional outburst of emotional trance. His garments were sometimes on his waist and at other times within his armpit. At all times and every where he used to sing the praises of the Lord and his Divine Sport with his enchanting voice. While in his attitude towards the masses, he was completely opposite. Accordingly, the kith and kins of his father-inlaw's family took him to be a mad man. Thereafter, he came down to Calcutta. While performing his daily duty i.e. the service of the Mother Bhabatarini, an outburst of emotional feelings was flowing in his mental plane. He began very difficult austere and ceaseless spiritual practice mostly in secrecy. Occasionally, such action caught the public eve. The rites and rituals of the spiritual practice were extra-ordinary and superhuman. Sometimes, they were like a child, sometimes like a demon and at another times like a mad man. Do you know how these were like? May be, he used to sleep in the cot of the Mother Bhabatarini, sometimes answerd his nature by climbing a tree. At other times, his state was above all type of human hatred. He realised that human excrement and sandal wood paste are essentially non-different and behaved accordingly. Watching and hearing all these, the lowly general public as well as Brahmins well-versed in the holy scriptures, reaffirmed their conviction of him as a thoroughly mad man. After completing his spiritual practices and ceaseless prayers when he turned sane and to his own self, he became extremely anxious to disseminate his spiritual knowledge, piety, consciousness and the true nature of the Supreme Spirit to the worldly folk. The individual souls were attracted to lust and gold, vanity for erudition and for name and fame. No body wanted to accept the ideas propagated by Sri Ramakrishna. Hence, no body paid any attention to his advice and sayings. So, Thakur began to move from door to door of the people to collect his followers. He commenced searching for pious and noble minded souls. learned people well-versed in the holy scriptures and approaching their hermitage met them wherever they were available. No body paid any respect and love to Thakur which were his due.

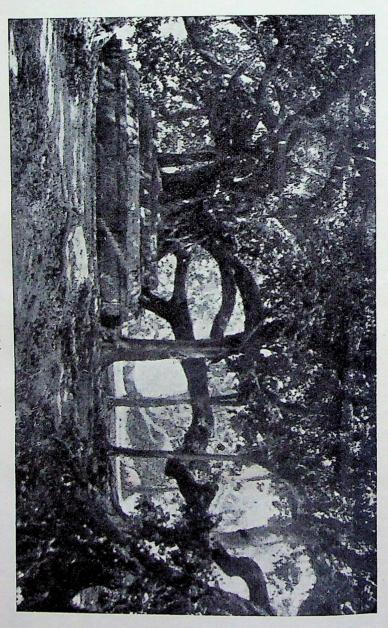
Being hungry when he asked somebody for food and drink he was denied of that. But Thakur was adamant, his physical features were very soft and tender, as if made of soft butter. If he advanced a few steps over the ground, there was every chance of his feet being bruised and blood coming out of those wounds. Once, his fingers were bruised by the sharp edge of a hand made bread (luchi). Judging from this fact, you may now understand what type of soft body was his! He needed a carriage to traverse a distance of a few yards. He had to approach other people to gather the fare of such carriage.

In this connection just consider one thing. What was the necessacity of that person to approach other people for help with a hesitant mood, analogous to an humble begger when that Thakur was an embodiment of supreme averson, whose renunciation synchronised with his words, deeds, and mind, whose body turned disfigured by the mere touch of women and money. who never desired any worldly object and accordingly had no want for any earthly thing, whose mind was fully occupied with the thought of the Mother Kali, who used to have constant talks directly with the Mother Kali, who could become totally engrossed in meditation of the Mother no sooner he wished. Do you want to know the inner significance of this matter, then look at those clouds in the sky. This is the rainy season, there is no need to invite the clouds; they themselves are about eagerly in different directions. Do you know why? In order to protect the heated earth from the high temperature by supplying water, not only to cool down the same, but also to make it more fertile. The condition of Sri Ramakrishna is like those clouds. He is the incarnation of mercy like the unbounded ocean of compassion. As these clouds are restless with the weight of the stored water, so Thakur appears to be restless with the burden of compassion and grace. Being insensible of the surroundings, he is roaming about hither and thither with the sole objective of protecting the individual beings from the three kinds of afflictions (material, spiritual and divine) by the cooling effect of bliss and contentment out of divine truth. There is no limit of his grace. The human beings have no power to perceive an iota of that grace. Just listen to the story of the mercy of Thakur. As his physique was an embodiment of kindness, so



Sri Ramakrishna (Portrait by Frant Dvorak)

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was it hardworking and painstaking. If you want to understand anything about the kindness and harship, then fix your gaze on the all enduring earth. Though it is being cut, grooved and dug in different ways by the iron cudgel and plough, but it does neither get rude even for once nor does is retort; on the other hand, it helps immensely the human beings by bestowing so many useful things. Thakur was like trat. So many people are speaking ill of him, others are torturing his sublime figure in so many ways and mis-behaving with him on so many occasions, yet he is all along eager and conscious of doing good and becoming of service to them. I have already described to you how frail was his sublime physique. Over and above this, if there was a slight excess or deviation from the daily routine, he would fall sick very easily. Once he was attacked with a stomach ache and had to stop his meal; throughout the day only a little quantity of sago mixed with water was permitted to take. Even in that condition of health, there was no respite of his going here and there. An ascetic used to stay with him. He was better known as Hazra. One day, he explained to Thakur "you are a realised person, a liberated soul, and often engrossed in emotional trance. Why do you not keep yourself fully absorbed in that state of deep meditation? You are unwell, so what is the necessacity of wandering here and there?" Like a small boy, Thakur had instant faith in whatever some body said. On hearing the remarks of Hazra, he thought that Hazra was quite right. "What is the necessacity of my moving about here and there." With this thought in his mind. Thakur reached the Pancha-bati tree (assemblage of five sacred trees of the Hindus). Immediately on arriving there he began to cry and became restless. Returning abruptly, he addressed Hazra in a chastising mood "You brother-in-law! I will not listen to your advice. I will better move from door to door for the well-being of the people even if it becomes necessary to do so in a delicate state of health with sago-water only." Now, you can imagine how firm was the depth of kindness and compassion of Thakur for the people! Can an worldly being realise this infinite grace? The domestic people are invariably selfish. Even, they do not move a little without some selfish motive. Hence, there is hardly any place for compassion within

the hearts of selfish people, let alone the depth of kindness. Even the trace of compassion cannot be found within such hearts.

This is the age of moving about in darkness without a spiritual guide. In this age, far from thinking of the Blessed Lord, even people have no faith in his own existence. One or two amongst hundreds of thousands who have firm faith in his existence, have properly understood that there is no way out for individual soul to realise God consciouness. But, whatever stories of Divine consciousness are described in the ancient mythology of the Hindus or amongst the ancient pious sages, they are the savings of ancient times! When and whose such sucess was achieved is not to be counted now. Those days are gone. Amongst thousands of people, one or two are comparatively in a higher state have, at least, reached the path of religious practice prescribed by the scriptures. This is the direction of time when the Supreme Spirit has incarnated in the form of Thakur. In what a different way Thakur has incarnated. He is totally devoid of external grandeur. He has not left any clue for which people will take him as Incarnation of Divinity. He is very simple, very straightforward and poor in appearance. That he who is the Brahman of the wise (Inanins), the Self of the yogis, the Blessed Lord of the devotees, the Lord of the primordial Shakti or Energy responsible for this creation, the sole God of creation, preservation and destruction of this mundane world, is roaming from door to door of the people like a beggar in the garb of a poor and illiterate Brahmin. How can this phenomenon be conceived by the worldly beings? When the Blessed Lord descend, in the playground of his Divine Sport as an Incarnation of Divinity. it becomes very difficult and painstaking to recognise him. Now, vou must have followed what is called unmanifested heing revealed, abstruse being straight?

Of all the various states and manifestations of the Blessed Lord, the incarnation in human form with his Divine Sport is extremely charming and baffling to intellect. In the eyes of those who follow the path of wisdom and yoga, the Blessed Lord is full of consciousness and luminousity but before the eyes of the devotees, He is full of delight and love. For this reason, the taste of the earnest devotee is thousand times more praiseworthy and desirable than that of the followers of true knowledge and yoga. The taste of the yogis and the wise, monotonous; in other words, they enjoy the existence of the Blessed Lord in one way only but the devotees enjoy the Lord in various manners and tastes. This subject was explained by Sri Ramakrishna by citing the illustration of the blowing of a kind of flute known as Sanai. Those who play the flute, have a flute each in their hands. One person only blows it for a particular tone, while the other person plays the flute to produce different notes. Here, the case is the same. The wise and the yogis taste the Lord in one form only, while the followers of the path of devotion enjoy the Lord in various ways e.g. as vegetable soup, hot curry, sauce, and fried vegetables etc. Do not think even for once that the Lord reveals His identity to the devotee in a personal form only and in nothing else. also manifests that He Himself has been transformed into all the living beings, the universe, twenty four tattwas including the five elements of the earth. He also reveals that He is existing in this world as its Self. That, He too has an indescribable and indeterminate nature is also revealed by Him. The followers of the path of true knowledge and yoga do not have even the experience of the followers of the path of devotion. The true devotee has the full knowledge of the Lord in all His attributes. This has been very clearly explained by Thakur citing the illustration in the form of a question put by Sri Ramachandra to his devoted follower the black faced monkey (Hanumana). One day Sri Ramachandra put this question to Hanumana who replied "Oh Rama! often I look upon you as my Lord and I am your servent. Sometimes, I feel you are a big blaze of fire and I am a sparkle of that, again at other times, I experience that there is no difference between you and me". Lord Rama revealed all his aspects to Hanumana. But Hanumana without laying any stress on or attachment to the other two aspects of divinity, maintained the attitude of devotion to the Lord as between a servant and his master. Once a follower who experiences the pleasing taste of devotion, does not become, at all, inclined to follow any other path or remain steady in other path.

The same expression of emotion was revealed by the Divine Sage Narada. The followers of the path of devotion face trials and hardship a hundred times more than those experienced by the followers of the path of true knowledge and yoga but the devout followers fall into such a class that being fully aware of these difficulties, they look upon all these hardships as their ornaments. In Vrindaban, Uddhaba explained to the Gopis the underlying truth of Yoga, but none of them paid any attention to his sermons. Their skin burnt at the thought of separation from Lord krishna, the golden complexion of their body became charcoal black, they turned almost blind wailing ceaselessly, still none of them closed their eyes even for once. As, after drinking the water mixed with sugarcandy, the liquid molasses does not at all tempt you, similarly any one having had the opportunity of a direct vision of the Blessed Lord once, with his eyes open, will never close his eyes lest he loses the sight even if he faces death. Brother! "Bravo! to the experience of the land of Braja". The bliss of yoga or the divine bliss appears much insignificant as compared to that profound joy.

"Alas! the great ascetic saints, whose holy feet are adored by,

All living beings of the three worlds,
Thou art practising fasting throughout life, living underneath
the trees with severe austerity, penance and
diverse rites, rituals and renunciation.
All efforts are directed to attain that trifling wealth,
though mortally afraid of the three kinds of afflictions and
miseries.

They are not inclined to watch the events of Braja as they are interested in the bliss of Yoga and Brahman which is insignificant in comparison to the joy in a drop of water of the milkmaids.

-(Sri Sri Ramakrishna Punthi)

It is very difficult to recognise the Blessed Lord in a human form. In whatever appearance or attributes may He descend, nobody can recognise Him unless he imparts that power to recognise the Lord. He can be realised through divine conscious-

ness. I am virtually perceiving, as an object can be seen in broad day light that the human form of Thakur Ramakrishna is pure consciousness solidified. As water solidifies in the form of ice in contact with a low temperature, exactly in the same way, the human appearance of our Lord Thakur has been shaped out of consciousness with the chilling effect of devotion. In order to recognise that embodied consciousness, pure-consciousness aroused by the Lord is the only way. Divine consciousness with a form can be recognised through conciousness alone. I do not find much difference between true devotion and true knowledge. What is devotion is also consciousness. What is consciousness is also devotion. So long the mind and intelligence of human beings remain polluted. till then they exist with separate characteristics. Consequently, they are separately called by two names i.e. mind and intelligence. But as soon as the state of that mind is tranformed to a clear and transparent stage, the above two separate faculties unite together and become one. In this state of unison, their earlier nature or name does not exist at all, they are then called only consciousness. One who belongs to a particular class or nature can recognise the nature or object of his class and realise the same. Hence the conscious soul can comprehend the Supreme Spirit with the help of consciousness alone while those who are ignorant recognise the objects of the market of nescience and grasp them immediately. The Supreme Spirit, out of His own free will, lends Himself to be comprehended by the individuals by imparting consciousness in their inner mind. Once Debendra Babu, the devout follower of our Lord became surcharged with profound bliss after recognising the master's real self. Immediately when it came to the knowledge of Thakur, he began to sing a song with a smile on his face. The song ran as follows:

Oh! clever man, why are you proud of your achievement? You cannot recognise unless the Supreme Being lends Himself to be revealed.

In whatever simple form the Supreme Spirit may exist in human appearance, the realised soul will be able to recognise his true self. With the help of consciousness the devotees of

Sri Ramakrishna recognised their Thakur of very poor attire as the Supreme Lord of the poor and down trodden. They came to know him as the all knowing spirit in the garb of an illiterate person and discovered him as the Supreme Majesty with all qualities, as unlimited though in the limited form. vou can repose your firm and simple faith at the lotus feet of Sri Ramakrishna, vour desires will be fulfilled in no time. It amounts to the same thing as total distrust for him, if after observing the transformation of the Divine Incarnation or testing some of his super human activities, one contemplates to believe him. Let me explain this in detail-please hear me. You may say, that you will accept Sri Ramakrishna as the Blessed Lord provided he is able to exhibit the images of the Mother Kali, Lord Krishna, or Lord Rama in his own person. In the case of such an idea, you may take it for granted that this amounts to nothing but total suspicion or disbelief. One who cannot repose his faith in one form or appearance, will not have faith in any form or appearance. Just imagine the limit of human intelligence. He is reposing his faith on a log of wood to cross the boundless ocean. In this frightful domestic world he is believing to dedicate his mind and soul at mercy of the embodiment of ignorance; but while placing his confidence at the lotus feet of Sri Ramakrishna, all sorts of hesitation, doubts, arguments and discrimination arise. I have come to my senses after knowing fully well the limit of human approach and cleverness. Accordingly, I am telling all these after being wise. Brother-do not eat by chewing only but devour by swallowing. Do you know what is called eating by chewing? Establishing faith after a lot of arguments counter arguments and discrimination is called eating by chew ing. You have decided to proceed after depending on those who have no power to go so far. The Blessed Lord is beyond the reach of argument, reason and debate. He is beyond the reach of the senses and mind. Your only capital is your mind. It is hardly possible for that mind to reach Him. In order to attain Him, the mind has to be left behind on the way. Under such circumstances what is the utility of argument, reason and debate? It is an easier path for a man to swallow it; in other words, to surrender to Him totally with simple faith saying

oh! Thakur, whatever you may direct I shall abide by. If you cannot realise Him, take resort to His name. So long the mind and intelligence rest as an evil spirit within yourself by keeping your body unclean and soiled, it is observed that people continue to shout, display their prowess to influence, threaten and roar. But, when the filth is removed, their condition be comes that of a faithful and devoted dog. Have you heard the story of being possessed by an evil spirit and exorcised from it? The same is the condition of the mind and intelligence when filled with dirt and freed from it.

In order to drive away the evil spirit from the mind, which is possessed with it, in other words to purify the mind which is unclear, the easiest path is taking recourse to chanting of the name of the Blessed Lord. Constant repitition of the name of the Lord, in simple fath, enables one to cleanse his unclean mind. Thakur Ramakrishna has repeatedly advised of this efficacy of chanting the name of the Lord. Singing in the praise of the Lord is the seed; it is the tree as well as the fruit. The Blessed Lord Himself dwells in His name. Since people do not pay much attention to this mere advice, hence Sri Ramakrishna himself used to sing the praise of his deity attended with dancing in rhythm and measured clapping of hands every evening to teach the lesson, and in this way became emotionally unbalanced. Thereafter, that maddening prayer to the Lord turned into the deepest state of transcendent meditation. By this example, Thakur is teaching and announcing the limited beings that the state of deepest emotional trance which is the result of severe spiritual practices and meditation in more than one birth, can also be attained by the power of repeating the name of the Lord. He used to explain this subject by a particular example i.e. how to become fully absorbed in a state of trance by singing praises to the Lord and repeating his name. It was as follows: One Vaisnava sage started in the initial stage, by praising the Lord by singing—"Gaur is my mata Hati". While chanting that praise repeatedly his state turned gradually into a deep ecstasy and emotional frenzy and he began to utter only the name "my Mata Hati" leaving behind the name 'Gaur'. Later, when that outburst of emotion gradually took a further upward trend, nothing except the words "Mata Hati"

could be pronounced. Thereafter, when the emotion still further deepened, the words "Hati" only was murmured by him. Still after that stage, in the higest level "Ha" only could be heard and the sage became totally unconscious of the outside world being silent in the deepest meditations and ecstasy. According to Shi Ramakrishna, taking refuge in the name of the Blessed Lord, listening to his name repeatedly and constant singing in praise for him is called true devotion as defined by the divine saint Narada. In this iron age, this type of devotion and dedication to the Lord is the easiest path to attain God-Consciousness. How novel is the idea of Sri Ramakrishna! Inwardly, he is full of true knowledge, but having regard to time and place, he veiled himself with the wrapper of devotion for the good and awakening of ordinary people. As an elephant has two types of tusks, one which is hidden is utilised for chewing food stuff and the other tusk is to exhibit outside. Likewise, the inside of Thakur is full of knowledge and wisdom but for setting example to the people, the attitude of devotion is maintained. The songs which were sung by Thakur in praise of the efficacy of chanting the name of the Lord may be stated in the following lines: -

"Oh! mother Kali, I depend on thy name only.

What's the necessacity of copper pots for worshipping, show of smile and rites, rituals and ceremonies?

The deadly knot of time is untied by repeating the name as has been demonstrated by Lord Siva.

I have become a porter of none else but that Siva. Whatever attainments may be obtained by chanting

the name of the Lord, why should I worry?

I have taken refuge in the Lord Siva, as his word is the last one."

(2) On my Divine Mother, if I die with Thy hallowed name (Durga, Durga) on my lips.

Then in the end, Oh! Giver of all-bliss, I shall reckon whether Thou savest—

Thy poor child from drowning in the ocean of sin. I might have slain a cow or a Brahmin or an unborn child! I might be a drunkard, nay more, the slayer of woman! But of all these dire sins I have not the slightest fear. Through faith in Thy holy name I can attain the highest bliss of Brahman."

While singing these songs, Thakur became overwhelmed with cestatic joy. Any one who has witnessed this state of Thakur, has realised what is the glory of the Lord's name! You often sing the song of the greatness of the name of Lord as composed by Girish Chandra Ghosh in his drama named "Chaitanyalila", (as under) :-

"Such pleasant is the name of Hari (the Lord), why not utter it? While fulfilling your heart's longing, satisfy with such a deal, why not the said desire did arise within you?

Once the name of the Lord is uttered, there is no discrimination between a wicked or an afflicted person.

Just utter once the name of the Lord, there being no

comparison

with his compassion.

Be fully enrapturied in his name, do not be. attracted to the vain world".

Brother, there is no need for making arguments and debates. Just follow the path indicated by Thakur Ramakrishna by repeating the name of the Lord as your asset and you will perceive that you have reached the goal in proper time. You have not to study the Gita, nor to go through ihe texts of the philosophy of Sankhya, Vedanta, neither have you to undertakereligious practices of ascetic austereties in the midst of five fires, nor to go on a pilgrimage to the four holy places, nor to meditate or chant the mystic formula and count the beads silently, not even to renounce your wife and children, not to leave behind your hearth and home and the native place. No austerity need be practised at all. Just, stick steadfastly to Sri Ramakrishna, the ocean of compassion and the pilot in the voyage of life, success will come out very quickly. Compassionate Sri Ramakrishna himself having attained self realisation through austere spiritual practices and prolonged meditation, collected all the results of his ceaseless spiritual practices for his followers who are without any spiritual discipline. weak, unprotected, without resources, miserable and seeking refuge in him. As the wealth accumulated by the father through hard (2) Page 276 of complete works of Swami Abhedananda

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labour is enjoyed also by the idle son, similarly, the followers who have taken refuge in him and who may be worst in nature. inherit his accumulated trasure. After accepting Ramakrishna as closer than your own soul, if you go on enjoying the earthly pleasures, you have not to worry about it. In time, you will find that Thakur has guided vou to the desired realm beyond this worldly bondage. Beware! whatever you may do but please do not leave the helmsman. Thakur Ramakrishna is so kind that if any body has taken refuge in him once, to whatever awkward place he might lead Thakur, whether that may be a burning ghat or any other place. Sri Ramakrishna accompanies him with great pleasure and protects him from all dangers. Take care! a repeated note of caution may be given here-never leave Sri Ramakrishna under any circumstances. If you say-"I am a wicked soul, I am guided by an evil mentality, and totally dependent on sensual pleasures of greed and lust, and have accordingly performed so many sinful acts and have no hope at all!" Then, you have not yet been able to recognise him. Nor have you been able to fathom the depth of his immense compassion and kindness. You have not yet had any glimpse of the Divine Sport of Sri Ramakrishna. In the store-house of the Blessed Lord, there is an unprecedented object called kindness. The holy frame of Sri Ramakrishna is composed af that kindness. In the pious body of that compassionate Ramakrishna, there is no other ingredient except kindness. Do you know why the omnipotent creator himself has assumed the form of Ramakrishna through the strength and virtue of that kindness? It is merely for upliftment of the despised, untouchable, evil minded individuals like you and me Sri Ramakrishna appears as a sanctifier of the sinful and un holy, rescuer of the wretched and friend of the poor and needy. Alas! you are becoming disappointed, thinking yourself helpless on this bank of the ocean of this world as a wicked minded impure heart and dependent on sense organs before that sublime figure who has such qualities and gracefulness. Fie on such an intelligence! Listen—as a policeman corrects a thief along with his associates, so the most gracious Ramakrishna will also take care of your mind which is surrounded by the six propen

sities together with all misdeeds and carry it through. As there are laws for punishment and imprisenment of the convict in the court of the police, so also, there is scope for liberation from the worldly prison house in the court of judgment of the compassionate Ramakrishna and full acquittal. The police people are just but our Lord is gracious. The high waves of kindness are such powerful in the mind of our Lord, that if any human being who happens to be such heavy as of the stature of thousand very high peaks of the Himalayas approaches him. will be swept away without leaving any scent and trace behind. Once any body takes refuge in Sri Ramakrishna, he is bound to be closely attracted by Thakur in no time according to his (Thakur's) usual method. Once he happens to see that pious figure in the court room, he becomes liberated, his mind is emanicipated and all the reactions of his past misdeeds are neutralised. Now, have you followed the glory of our Lord and the great influence of his name? Be very careful! Please do not give up the name of the supremely gracious Lord Rama krishna.

XV

According to Thakur, contradiction of the doctrine of personal God by means of intelligence and debates is an act of ignorance. In order to settle the dispute amongst the various controversial religious sects. after ceaseless meditation and spiritual practices in various forms and different paths. Sri Rama-Krishna realised God in various appearances and ways and then said—"whatever you are propagating are all true. If you proceed with simple faith in your own path and according to your own creed, you are sure to attain God-consiciousness at some time or other". This great and catholic idea is manifested only in Sri Ramakrishna. Now-a-days, this idea is also prevalent amongst his devout followers who have taken shelter at hisbenign feet. Where his grace extends, there is no place for grudge against religion or faith. The followers of Sri Ramakrishna accept with the deepest reverence the various forms of the Blessed Lord. They may not agree fully with the followers of a particular faith or religion but do not have the least illfeeling or hatred towards any creed or religion. This is clearly and vividly perceptible and is only the special distinguishing. feature amongst the followers of Sri Ramakrishna children inherit the nature of their parents automatically, similarly, the devotees of Sri Ramakrishna have imbibed this broad mindedness from their Thakur. I have often repeated to you the catholic ideas of Thakur because this universally accepted, widely praised, world renowned and all embracing thought is revealed in him; it is he only who can be called the universal spiritual guide. He is the reigning deity in whatever creed or path one may follow and this is his indication. Like the various effulgent colours in the self luminous rays of the Sun, all the simple but dazzling signs of different religions, creed, and paths are clearly perceptible in the all-embracing luminous truth of the Divine Sport of Sri Ramakrishna. The spontaniety of this super human, universally accepted truth of religion can find no other place for revelation than in the Blessed Lord. Realisation of God-consiciousness through severe penance, meditation and spiritual practices in different ways to establish the fact that every religion is true, is only within the power of the Blessed Lord alone and none else. It does not lie within the power of anybody on earth excepting the Lord, to arouse by olaying the flute of consciousness, the heart full of lust and greed for gold, immersed in sensual pleasures and enchanted by delusion. Without going through the sacred scriptures, and being illiterate, it is never possible for any one except Blessed Lord himself to silence and bewilder the learned people and scholars of the various scriptures by explaining the hidden truth of the different scriptures in the simplest language with straightforward examples. Whatever may be the receptable wherein the Divine Energy is manifested, we have to accept that as the Blessed Lord. Wherein the spirit and idea of Krishna is revealed, any devotee will immediately believe that vision of the Lord Krishna has been realised at the sight of that figure. Some of the followers of the path of Yoga, profess that any human being may become Lord Krishna by constant meditation and spiritual practices. But, this saying cannot be totally relied upon as Thakur Ramakrishna does not approve of this. Up to what higher stage can a human being reach by the grace of the Lord, Thakur has said thus. A devotee used to serve the Blessed Lord. One day, while the Lord was lying in his bed,

the devotee was messaging his feet; in the meantime he became drowsy. The Lord asked him "are you feeling sleepy, then better occupy a side of my bed and go to sleep". With the command of the Lord, the devotee began to sleep by his bed side. From this instance, it is very clear that the individual self can never become the Universal Self. Whether anybody may admit or not due to ignorance, may profess or not but that receptacle wherein the Divine Energy is revealed, will have to be accepted as the blessed Lord. Otherwise the Vedas, the Mythologies, the Tantra and the Gita shall all be proved untrue. Whatever symptoms have been attributed to the Blessed Lord in the Mythologies, they are all present within Sri Ramakrishna. Such is the sport of cosmic nescience (Mahamava) that she does not allow the Blessed Lord personified to be correctly recognised, though revealed to a certain extent. I have stated earlier to you about this matter, let me explain it clearly again, please pay attention. In the play ground of ceaseless meditation and spiritual practices of our Lord, a lady appeared before him. As learned she was, so was she a devout. In the matter of debates and exposition of the true meanings of the holy scriptures, no scholar could defeat her. She was better known as the 'Brahmani' in the Divine Sport of our Lord. At that time. Mathur Babu invited all the contemporary learned Pundits for debating with the Brahmani over the interpretation of the scriptures but none could overpower her with arguments. According to her own understanding, judgment and devotion, Brahmani decided to accept Sri Ramakrishna as the Blessed Lord and placed that sublime proposal before the learned assemblage there. When those scholars denied to believe her statement, Brahmani pointed out to them clearly that all the marks of Divine Incarnation which are described in the Mythologies are present in Sri Ramakrishna. The learned persons verified with their own eyes all those marks with the description of the scriptures and admitted them. But, they could not still declare Sri Ramakrishna the Blessed Lord. From this, it would appear very clear that the study of the scriptures or the scriptures themselves though point out the Blessed Lord, still do not reveal Him clearly. Whether one is able to recognise Him or not, following a straight and simple reasoning, it should

at least be admitted that where there are marks, there certainly exists the marked. Because, like the image, the marks are indicative of the object. Where there is the marked, the marks exist as indications. And where there are marks the existence or that object, whose marks are available is ensured. Just think you have learnt the lesson of botany, that there is a tree called the banyan tree. The special characteristics of that tree is that the shade cast by that tree is hot in winter and cool in summer. By learning from the book one comes to know only the merit of the tree but he has not seen with his own eyes how does that tree look like. Hence, he is not capable of recognising that tree even if he happens to see it suddenly. Once, while travelling in a foreign country in a hot summer, one fellow fully tired of walking, his throat becoming dry in thirst and his body sweating all over, was accidentally present beneath a tree. The ground below the tree was very cool and within a very short time he felt fully contented. When gazing repeatedly at the pleasing tree, he was reminded of his lesson of the banyan tree which he studied in his book. In order to determine whether that was particularly a banyan tree or not, he stayed there till the winter months, when he found that the ground beneath it was very warm. Now, tell me, whether you can recognise the tree or not? Will you not call that a banvan tree? Just listen to a song: -

Do I worship Ramakrishna for nothing? He is like the fathomless ocean, the pitrable helmsman to cross the river of the earthly life

He is my most bosom friend and revealed himself after finding me out.

He does not become adverse even if I indulge in hundreds of evil deeds, rather agrees to whatever I say. He follows me constantly, lest some trouble befalls me: realising this attitude, I fail to comprehend whether he adores me or I worship him. He is the soul of my soul, cares for me from the

core of his heart :

who else is there so friendly and a well-wisher, as is my Lord Ramakrishna.

APPENDIX

GLOSSARY

Afflictions:

Adhyattmik— Spiritual.

Adhibhautik—Relating to human (physical) bodies (consisting of five elements—death, sickness etc.).

Adhidaibik—Relating to natural calamity (floods, earth-quakes etc.).

Aghasura—A Demondoing mischief to the society at large; later, killed by Sri Krishna—the Incarnation of the Lord.

Ariadaha - A northern suburb of Calcutta.

Arjuna—Third son of King Pandu, the great hero of the battle of Kurukshetra, whose charioteer was Lord Krishna who delivered his sermons to him as depicted in the famous Gita.

Baranagore-A northern suburb of Calcutta.

Bidushaka—A satirical accomplice (jester) of the hero in a drama.

Brahmo-samaj—Name of Hindu Unitarian Church founded by Raja Ram Mohan Roy in 1830 A.D.

Cossipore—A northern suburb of Calcutta.

Dakshineswar—A northern suburb of Calcutta wherein Rani (Lady) Rashmoni founded the Kali Temple.

Daksha-Yaggma—Daksha, the spiritual son of Lord Brahma (the Preserver of Creation) arranged a sacrificial ceremony of fire in which all the Gods except Lord Siva (husband of Sati, the daughter of Daksha) were invited. Just on hearing the insulting remarks of Daksha about her husband. Sati left her mortal frame at that very place. At this, Siva suddenly appeared on the scene and killed Daksha with the help of his followers and threw into confusion the entire ceremony, danced violently and carried away the dead body of Sati.

Dasharatha—Renowned King of Ayodhaya, father of Lord Rama who went to wilderness to keep the truthful promise of his father as depicted in the Ramayana.

- D. Gupta & Co.—A very famous house of Chemists and Druggists of Calcutta during the last two decades of the 19th Century.
- Durga Charan Nag—A lay disciple and a staunch devotee of Sri Ramakrishna Paramhansha.
- Dwarka—A city in Gujarat (western India) on the bank of the Arabian Sea, famous as the seat of the Kingdom of Lord Krishna.
- Girish Babu—Sri Girish Chandra Ghosh—a great Hindu poet, scholar, dramatist and an eminent actor of the stage in the 19th Century, Calcutta. He led an indisciplined life, but by the magic touch of Sri Ramakrishna, his life turned over a new leaf. He completely surrendered to Him and ultimately became the most devoted disciple of Sri Ramakrishna.
- Gita—It is a treatise on Divine Songs which sets forth in penetrating words the essential principles of Hindu religion. "It has enduring value not only for Indians but for all mankind. Christopher Isherwood".
- Gokul—A village about 9 miles away from Mathura and abode of Nanda and Jashoda where Krishna and his brother Balaram were brought up as cowboys.
- Hanumana—The monkey-chief who had absolute faith in Lord Rama who was his only ideal deity. He assisted Rama in waging war against Ravana of Sri Lanka with his innumerable fellow monkeys by crossing the sea.
- Hazra—A moral householder who afterwards devoted his life in search after God at Dakshineswar Kali Temple. He was a true devotee but preferred to travel along the path of Jnana (knowledge).
- Jana—The mother of Prabir and queen of Niladhaya of the Mahabharata fame.
- Jashoda—Foster mother of Lord Krishna and wife of Nanda. Kanai—Affectionate name of Lord Krishna in boyhood.
- Kakurgachi—A quiet garden-house of RamBabu situated on the eastern part of Calcutta wherein Sri Ramakrishna set his foot once.

- Kanasha-Maternal uncle of Lord Krishna, a wicked tyrannical King of Mathura who was afterwards killed by his nephew Sri Krishna.
- Keshab Chandra Sen-The noted religous reformer of the 19th Century of India. He was a great Brahma Samaj leader and founder of the sect called New Dispensation. Towards the latter part of his life, he became a staunch follower of Sri Ramakrishna.

Kuvera-Hindu mythological demi-god in-charge of wealth and riches.

Maithili-Relating to Mithila (earlier known as Videha), a district town of Bihar which has a peculiar sweet dialect.

- Mathur Babu-Son-in-law of Rani Rashmoni. He married her third daughter (Karunamoyee) and after her premature death again married the youngest daughter of Rani Rashmoni. He recognised the divine power and superhuman character of Sri Rrmakrishna and became his staunch devotee.
- Maya-'Cosmic nescience_It has the (1) power of projecting a world of false appearances (Vikshepa) and (2) the power of veiling the real nature of Brahman (avarana). former creates the difference between self and not-self, Brahman and the world, while the latter creates bondage to embodied existence subject to time, space and causality." (Jadu Nath Sinha,-Ramaprosad's Devotional Songs (The Cult of Shakti).

Maheswara_Supreme Lord of the Hindus. Mythologically he is the Lord of destruction or dissolution of this universe.

Metiaburuz-A southern suburb of Calcutta.

Dr. Mohendra Lal Sirkar-The best Hindu physician of Calcutta of that time. His opinion carried much weight with the European physicians of highest repute.

Lord Narayana-In Hindu mythology, he is the original Supreme Lord (beloved husband of Laxmi, the Goddess of riches and plenty.)

- Narendra—Narendra Nath Dutta, a direct disciple of Sri Ramakrishna. Afterwards, he became famous as Swami Vivekananda.
- Panchavati—Assemblage of five sacred trees of the Hindus, Pandavas—The five famous sons (i.e. Judhisthira, Bhima, Arjuna, Nakula and Sahadeva) of king Pandu of Kurukshetra as depicted in the Mahabharata.
- Paramhansa—One who hasattained God-consciousness (Nirvikalpa Samadhi). He sees the world as Swarupa or Brahmakara i.e. the world is as good as Brahman, not unreal. To him, there is no separate identity of the world as the general people thinks or sees. "Having attained to the supreme God-consciousness, he lives in the world like an eternal witness of all mental and physical changes'. (Path of Realisation—Swami Abhedananda). According to the scriptures, he either wears only a piece of cloth or goes naked, begs and eats with hands only. Does not touch coins.
 - Pathak—Literally means a reader. Here, it may stand for an inquisitor.
- Prakriti—The primordial Energy (eternal). It envelopes the universe. Time produces changes in Prakriti with her three gunas (Sattva, Rajas and Tamas). It is the creative energy which is responsible for all creation by coming in contact with Purusha or the Supreme light of universal consciousness.
- Provasha—A religious place on the bank of the Arabiaan Sea (near Somenath) where Sri Krishna left his mortal frame being killed by a bowman with his arrow.
- Probodh—It is an individual name. Here, it may stand for an awakened soul.
- Puranas—The sacred scriptures of the Hindus next in authority to the Vedas. There are 18 great Puranas and many small Puranas.
- Putana—Female demon doing mischief to the society at large.

 She was killed by Lord Krishna, the Supreme Incarnation of God.

- Radha—She was the beloved consort of Sri Krishan and regarded as his "Hladini Shakti".
- Ram Babn-Ram Chandra Dutta—a devoted householder disciple of Sri Ramakrishna. He was a scientist, a teacher of Chemistry in the Medical College of Calcutta and a good speaker and writer.
- Ramakrishna Punthi—Its author is Akshoy Kumar Sen. It depicts the life story of Sri Ramakrishna in melodious verse.
- Rama Prosad—A Hindu psalmist, a great Yogi and a true devotee of the Divine Mother of the universe. His songs have deep spiritual meaning. He lived in the 18th Century.
- Rani Rashmoni—Born in 1793 of pnor parents. Married to Raj Chandra Das, a very rich landlord of those days. Highly religious minded, she recognised the divinity in Sri Ramakrishna whom she appointed initially as a priest of her great Kali Temple at Dakshineswar.
- Samadhi—The state of ecstasy or super-consciousness—a complete absorption of the mind in the object of meditation e.g. The Absolute or the Symbol. It is mainly of two kinds: Savikalpa and Nirvikalpa.
- Sankara (Acharya)—He lived in India in the 8th Century A.D. The commentator of the Vedanta Sutras and the greatest exponent of Advaita Vedanta (monism).
- Sashadhar-Tarkachudamoni—A sanskrit scholar of great repute and eloquent preacher of the philosophy and religion of the Vedanta.
- Shakti—The motherly aspect of the Cosmic Energy of the Absolute Brahman. She is the abode of contradictory qualities. She is the Supreme Knowledge as well as the Supreme Maya.
- Sita—The consort of Rama, the Divine Incarnation of the Lord and the hero of the Ramayana. She was the perfect embodiment of womanhood according to the Hindus.

- Sri Krishna—She Incarnation of the Almighty He is regarded as the greatest of the saviours of mankind.
- Taraka—A female demon doing mischief to the society at large. She was killed by Sri Krishna, the Incarnation of the Lord.
- Tantras—The sacred writings of the Saiva and Shakta cult among the Hindus.
- Vakasura—A male demon doing mischief to the society at large. He was killed by Lord Krishna.
- Vraja—A sacred place generally called Vrindaban, about 7 miles from Mathura, a district in Uttar Pradesh where the sepherd Krishna in his boyhood and youth played his Divine Sports and performed miracles.

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Shri Mihir Lal Dutta has the rare fortune of receiving blessings from Swami Abhedananda, a direct disciple of—Sri Ramakrishna. So I think, he understands the implications of the spiritual message of Sri Ramakrishna better than any ordinary scholar.

I have gone through 'The Glory of Sri Ramakrishna' by Sri Mihir Lal Dutta. This is really a faithful translation of 'Sri Sri Ramakrishna Mahima' written by Akshoy Kumar Sen, the celebrated author of "Sri Sri Ramakrishna Punthi".

'Sri Sri Ramakrishna Mahima' is both philosophical and devotional. It is written in Bengali in a very grand style. To translate this in English is a stupendous task. Sri Dutta, I think, has been successful in his attempt. The book, I am sure, will be enjoyed specially by the devotees, in India and abroad not acquainted with Bengali language. I congratulate Sri Dutta for his rendering a great service to Sri Ramakrishna literature.

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AUM

"Rid of taints, eternal,
And of forms infinite,
Moved by love of worshippers,
He takes a human from;
Incarnate God, the supreme Lord,
Ever adorable,
Him Ramakrishna with heads
bent down,
We meekly salute."

Swami Abhedananda